National Library of Canada

Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

Canada

University of Alberta

Satisfaction with the Christian Direction at Edmonton Christian High School

by

Peter Buisman

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education
in
Educational Administration

Department of Educational Policy Studies

Edmonton, Alberta

Spring 1996

National Library of Canada
Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services Branch
395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
Direction des acquisitions et des services bibliographiques
395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-612-10779-5

Canada

University of Alberta

Library Release Form

Name of Author: Peter Buisman

Title of Thesis: Satisfaction with the Christian Direction at Edmonton Christian High School

Degree: Master of Education

Year this Degree Granted: 1996

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta Library to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly, or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves all other publication and other rights in association with the copyright in the thesis, and except as hereinbefore provided, neither the thesis nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatever without the author's prior written permission.

P Buisman

Jan. 30/96

25 Lennox Dr.
St. Albert AB.
T8N 4L8

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *Parent and Student Satisfaction with the Christian Direction at Edmonton Christian High School* submitted by Peter Buisman in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Educational Administration.

Dr. F. Peters

Dr. M. Haughey

Dr. J. Parsons

Date: Jan. 25 1996

Abstract

This thesis examines the extent to which students and parents are satisfied with the Christian direction at Edmonton Christian High School. ECHS states that all they do and teach is done from a Christian perspective. Students are meant to explore and discover all aspects of God's creation and are encouraged to serve the world in transforming activities to make the world a place that sees the Bible as the guide for living. ECHS views students as image bearers of Christ, and respects these students as individuals who should be given every opportunity to develop their individual gifts. Several expressions of what Christian schools ought to be were examined. This thesis claims that, in spite of a real desire for change with some of these expressions, ECHS has been able to fulfil its mission as a Christian school and has satisfied many of the parents and students.

Table of Contents

Chapter — Page

I. Introduction 1
- Statement of the Problem 4
- Sub Statements of the Problem 5
- Significance of the Study 6

II. A Literature Review
- Introduction 9
- The Reformed Perspective 11
- Visioning for "Reformed" Schools 14
- Christian Schools: A Different Look 17
- The Vision for ECHS 19
- CSI Schools and ECHS in a Canadian Private School Context 20
- Challenges Facing Christian Schools Today 22
- Other Studies Done Concerning West Edmonton Christian School 26
- Edmonton Christian High School (1989) 29
- CSI Schools and ACSI Schools in the USA 32
- CSI Schools of Ontario-The Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools 33
- Other Studies Completed in the Area of Student and Parent Satisfaction 34
- Conclusions 37

III. Methodology
- Research Design 39
  - Data Collection 40
  - Limitations 42
  - Delimitations 43
  - Data Analysis 44

IV. Description and Discussion of the Quantitative Data
- Introduction 46
- Being a Part of a Christian Community 47
- An Overall Understanding and Promotion of a Christian's Place in the World 48
- Development of a Personal Faith Relationship with Christ 51
- Teacher/Student Relations 53

Chapter Page

Discipline....55
Evaluation....58
Student Relationships....59
Extra-Curricular Activities....61
Specific Course Contributions....62
Overall Expectations of Christian Education....64
Summary....65

V. Description and Discussion on Qualitative Data From the Questionnaires

Introduction....76
Being Treated with Respect....67
Overall Class and School Atmosphere....68
The Schools Sense of Community and its Ability to Develop that Community....70
Student Relationships....72
Student Lifestyle....73
Discipline....75
The School's Desire or Ability to Encourage Students to Make a Personal Commitment to Jesus Christ....76
Formal Devotional Activities....77
The Teacher's Approach to Students and their Courses, and General Teacher Attitude....79
The Contributions of Particular Courses to the Christian Direction in the School....80
Extra-curricular Activities....80
Transformational, Isolationist, or Conformist Education....81

VI. Description and Discussion of the Results of the Interviews

Introduction....84
Parent Interviews....84
Student Interviews....99

VII. Synthesis and Conclusions

Introduction....112
Community Development....113
A Christian's Place in the World....114
Teacher/Student Relationships....115
Discipline....116

Chapter Page

Evaluation....117
Extra-curricular Activities....118
Emphasis on Personal Faith Development....119
Transformational, Conformist, or Isolation....120
Summary of Recommendations....121

References....123

Appendix A....125
Covering Letter....125
Sample Questionnaire....126
Interview Schedule....130

Appendix B....131
ECHS Mission Statement....131

Appendix C....138
Quantitative Data Analysis....138

Chapter 1

Satisfaction with the Christian Direction at Edmonton Christian High School

Introduction

Edmonton Christian High School (ECHS), along with most independent schools, exists to realize an espoused faith commitment or world view (Hollaar, 1989, p.1). Together with the family, church, and community, the school has joined in the important role of guiding children in a way that will shape and prolong the traditions and mores of the parents that send their children and of other friends of the school. This culture is one that is deeply rooted in Holy Scripture and based on God's call to spread the love of Christ in everything one does. ECHS has grown and developed for 27 years in the city of Edmonton. Notwithstanding the fact that much of what has shaped ECHS has included the social values and beliefs of society at large, i.e. economics, the dominant influences have been the ideas and workings of people who have committed their lives to Jesus Christ. As well, many of the people who have attended ECHS, have taught there, or who have been in leadership positions, have been people who are members of the Christian Reformed Church, a church that finds its roots in Dutch Calvinism.

Christian Education has played a major role in my life for as long as I can remember. I have been privileged to attend Christian elementary and high school in Ontario and a Christian college in the United States. I have also taught in a Christian high school for the past fifteen years. My family's close tie to the Christian school movement was evidenced by my father's recent retirement as the treasurer of his local Christian school, after thirty-five years of service. My children also attend a Christian school and I am grateful for the

opportunity they have. I have been pleased with the education that they have received, as I believe they have been opened up to, and challenged to live, the Christian way of life.

Presently I teach at Edmonton Christian High School (ECHS) which has its roots in the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) and is referred to as a school with a "Reformed" perspective. Begun by Dutch immigrants in the 1940s, the school, in the beginning, almost exclusively comprised children from Dutch, CRC families. Since this time however, the school has grown substantially and has become interdenominational. As well, large numbers (approximately 25%) of students come from ethnic backgrounds other than the Netherlands. ECHS is part of a larger body called Christian Schools International. Grades 10, 11 and 12 are taught at ECHS.

Although CRC schools are a relatively new development in Canada, they have been established in North America for over 100 years. The first school opened in Canada in Holland Marsh, Ontario, in 1943. Since then some 140 schools, closely connected to the CRC, have opened in Canada. The schools have been parent controlled. Enrolments in these schools have remained relatively stable as they have enjoyed consistent support from the CRC community.

Although the schools have a close connection to the CRC they are not controlled by the church. Early in the history of the relationship between church and schools the sphere of education was placed under the control of parents and friends committed to the notion of Christian education (Hollaar, 1989, p.136). When the church had control of education the emphasis was on sheltering and protecting students from the ideas of the state controlled schools.

Later, influenced by Dutch scholars like Abraham Kuyper and Groen VanPrinsterer, the mission of the schools began to change. Ideas about bringing the Christian witness to politics, business, and culture became popular. Instead of schools sheltering students, students were taught how their faith could make a difference in the world. Students began to hear words like transformation. They were taught and challenged to transform society and culture. As these changes in vision were taking place "some significant tensions emerged which continue into the present day between a pietistic and isolationist mindset and the more transformationist mindset" (Hollaar, 1989, p.138).

Within the last six years, the years that I have been associated with the school, much concern has been expressed regarding ECHS. Although much of its support still comes from the CRC, ECHS has only managed to attract approximately 60% of the children from these churches in the greater Edmonton area. As well, the growth rate for ECHS has not paralleled the growth rate of private Christian schools in general. This statistical evidence has prompted some parents to ask, "What is wrong with ECHS?"

The staff and administration, along with the board, are concerned about the low numbers and about the negative talk about the school. One also realizes that any conflicts that may exist between staff and parents, between board and parents, between staff members, or between the board and the teachers will ultimately affect the quality of education. The interacting goals of the school with those of the community must somehow be brought together to form an educational program that will satisfy the supporting community. If this is not possible the prospect of losing ECHS is real. The process of bringing the

goals of the school and the community in sync is ongoing. This thesis could be considered part of the process as I will investigate the extent to which parents and students are satisfied with the school.

Statement of the Problem

ECHS is a private Christian school. Its Christian direction forms the basis for all other aspects of schooling. Discovering the extent to which parents and students are satisfied with this Christian direction, in the many facets of schooling, could result in a legitimate understanding of what is presently desired for the school.

In response to these observations, the research question will be:

1. Are parents, students, teachers, and graduates satisfied with the religious direction, as practised, at ECHS?

There are several ways in which a Christian School can articulate its direction. Christian schools out of the "Reformed" tradition usually define themselves as schools that guide students to lead a Christian way of life. This way of life is characterized first and foremost by a personal belief in God and an acceptance of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world. This belief states that everything in creation has been redeemed by Jesus Christ. Therefore, every subject that is taught and all other activities that are participated in are meant to reflect the truth of Jesus Christ. Nothing is neutral. Everything that is taught and every activity participated in, should be done out of a Christian perspective.

Second, students are encouraged to take up positions in the Christian and secular communities, affecting change and bringing about the peace of Jesus Christ in today's world. Students are challenged to develop all the

talents they were given and to mature as individuals. As well, students should realize that we all live in community, where we must share one another's burdens and joys in a spirit of trust, openness, and acceptance so that everyone will feel part of that community. All these things are done out of a spirit of gratitude for the salvation received from Jesus Christ.

This vision for "Reformed" schooling is, however, dynamic. To be Reformed means to be constantly reforming. There isn't one set way in which "Reformed" schools operate. The culture of the school can be fashioned in many ways. Some schools may feel that the means to achieve the vision would include a strong academic program with strict discipline. Others may feel that a close caring relationship between staff and students along with a more sensitive approach to discipline would achieve the vision best. Whatever the case, a clear understanding of student and parent perceptions of the direction of the school would help to improve or affirm ECHS. At the very least, simple dialogue regarding direction would go a long way in cultivating better relations between the school and the parents and students.

Sub Statements of the Problem

A number of sub statements to the problem are listed here. These will help to direct the research. From the general research question, and from the various interpretations of the vision for ECHS, the following eight sub-questions emerge:

1. Do parents and students embrace the "Reformed" direction at ECHS, as stated in its vision statement?

2. To what extent does ECHS influence the lives of its students to live a Christian life?
3. Are there areas of the curriculum, or in extra-curricular activities, that make a greater contribution to the way parents and students perceive the Christian direction of the school?
4. To what extent does the influence of teachers affect the parents' and students' perception of the Christian direction for the school and their acceptance of this path?
5. To what extent does the administration of discipline affect the parents' and students' perception of the Christian direction for the school?
6. To what extent does teachers' formal and informal evaluation of students, affect the parents' and students' perception of the Christian direction for the school?
7. To what extent do the relationships that students have with each other affect the parents' and students' perception of the Christian direction for the school?
8. How do the number and quality of formal devotional activities affect the parents' and students' perception of the Christian direction for the school?

The Significance of the Study

This study is significant in that it will provide clues for the supporting community, and for ECHS itself, that could disclose whether or not the Christian vision, as practised, is in harmony with student and parent ideas for what a Christian school should be. It will also give ECHS feedback as to the relative success it is having in engaging students to embrace the vision and goals for

the school. The research can provide information on specific areas of strength, upon which a school can build, and indicate particular areas of concern, which can be addressed to affect positive change. The tools, for determining the answers, can also be used by the schools as a method for ongoing analysis of their effectiveness.

Perhaps the key to the study is to revisit or refocus the vision for the school. In the day to day responsibilities and busyness of running schools, it is difficult to hold out the vision for the institution consistently and appropriately. To reflect on what you are doing, to what purpose you are doing it, and the means to which you are achieving the purpose, are necessary tasks. The decisions that one makes are often made in the haste of the busyness of a day. These decisions are not always influenced by the ultimate purpose for the school but by the influences of the dominant social pressures, e.g., economics or e.g., the loudest or most influential trustee. The study can help the supporting communities, teachers, parents, boards, administrations and students become more aware of the influences of the culture around us and cognizant of the vision for Christian Education. ECHS is not meant to be just another school of the province but a viable alternative.

The challenge of offering distinct, alternative education is further exacerbated by the demands and restrictions placed on ECHS by the province of Alberta. To offer Alberta government diplomas the prescribed curriculum must be offered. To add to this, all students must write provincial examinations, compelling teachers to teach to the exam. The difficulty of offering a Christian perspective in history, math, or science is problematic when you are beginning with a prescribed curriculum. Yet this is precisely what is being attempted.

Three groups of people may find the study helpful. Parents interested in sending their children to a Christian school can look to the study as an indicator of ECHS' success. Parents could make informed decisions regarding their childrens' schooling. In this same context, parents of students that are already attending the school, and parents of students anticipating attending, may also be able to see a role that they might play in affecting positive change.

Teachers may be encouraged by the results. They may feel that they are accomplishing their goals and that their goals are congruent with the goals of the school. On the other hand, teachers may also be persuaded that their own internalizing and articulation of the vision, as expressed to their students, is inadequate, and begin a process of change to get their goals in line with the vision and culture of the school. Teachers could also be encouraged to dialogue with one another on strengths and weaknesses, to affect change and to provide encouragement for each other.

The administration and board can also look to the study to help themselves, and the supporting communities, understand and articulate the vision for the school. With this understanding they would have a more complete picture of the effectiveness of the school and be able to make decisions which are informed and congruent with the goals and culture of the school.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

The Christian Schools with which I have been associated are those that are affiliated with Christian Schools International (CSI), an association rooted in the Reformed tradition and closely connected to the Christian Reformed Church. CSI was founded in 1920 by Reformed Christians who believed that students and teachers should view life through the spectacles of Holy Scripture (CSI, 1993). Presently, CSI has 435 member schools, 90,800 students and 4890 teachers scattered throughout the United States, Canada, and Australia (Kaufman, 1992). CSI has its headquarters in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

To explain the Reformed perspective, as it relates to education, has been a challenge that many writers and teachers have found difficult. To be able to point to specific things that make ECHS a Christian school, rooted in the Reformed perspective, is also a challenge. Yet this is precisely what teachers, parents, the school board, and the supporting community should be able to do. It is the essence of what makes ECHS different.

In response to this challenge I will attempt to describe the Reformed perspective as it relates to education and Christian schools. In reading and analyzing the mission statement for ECHS, it seems clear that this statement can be referenced to Reformed perspective. My intention is to point out these references in an attempt to place ECHS within the realm of a "Reformed" school.

It is important to note that although ECHS and other Christian CSI schools may have put together vision statements that express a Reformed

perspective, the question of whether or not the culture of the school reflects the vision statement remains. To go from vision to practice is often difficult. Vision statements tend to be philosophical and ambiguous, and interpretations of these statements can be varied. Since varied interpretations lead to different school cultures, one can imagine the discussions that can take place in staff rooms, parents' living rooms, and student lounges regarding levels of satisfaction with the schools. There isn't one agreed upon way to provide Christian education.

To place ECHS in the context of a Reformed vision, and to come to an understanding of how this Reformed vision is being practised, it is essential to examine the context of the lives of parents and students. This context will aid in an understanding of parent and student comments about the school. Similar studies have been done with other Christian schools and the diversity of interpretation of vision has led to varying degrees of satisfaction. This literature review will also look at these studies and relate them to the recent discussions on the nature and purpose of Reformed Christian schools. Comments that parents and students make about school in general, about discipline, about the way teachers teach, the kind of formal devotional activities that are experienced, evaluation, extra-curricular activities or other aspects of schooling, will provide hints as to how one thinks about schooling.

As well parents and students may give hints as to the type of Christian schooling they prefer, with respect to the old church controlled isolationist school, or the more modern transformationist or conformist orientations. All three orientations will be explained as enter into a discussion of the Reformed Perspective.

The Reformed Perspective

The basis for Reformed vision can be summed up in the words Creation, Fall, Redemption. Creation is the manifestation of God's handiwork. Our world was created good, and belongs to God. "God faithfully sustains it by his providence. Creation is the theatre of God's glory, displaying his power and majesty" (CSI,1993, p.5). The human race is the crown of this creation. The role of the human race in this world is to be one of caretaker, responsible to God and to each other.

The human race and creation are, however, greatly affected by evil. Since Adam and Eve fell to the temptation of the devil, our world has experienced brokenness and pain. This brokenness is not limited to anything. It effects every aspect of creation. "Thinking, feeling, and creativity are believed to be just as susceptible to sin as the human will is; politics and commerce are no more prone to evil than are scripture exegesis and acts or worship" (Hull, 1993, p.67). The consequence of this fall is death. However, God promised not to leave his children. Instead he promised to continue to be in control of everything, and in his infinite love and mercy, he sent his son Jesus Christ into the world to save humankind from eternal death by dying on the cross. His death paid the entire debt of sin and restored the relationship between God and his people. All that is required of people is to repent of their sins and believe that Jesus Christ died to make all things new.

In this world we see people either rejecting or accepting God's call to repentance. If the call is rejected, people will respond by turning to another god for their reason for being. When people confess that Jesus died for their sins they will respond to that confession by doing good according to Holy Scripture.

Doing good, according to Reformed people, means, among other things, to serve and bring healing to the broken world. The Reformed tradition is firmly committed to the ideal of working towards a complete transformation of this sinful world to one that accepts God as the guide for living. This transformation does not take place overnight but in small steps and usually within the context of one's own life. The Reformed tradition therefore denies any belief that Christians should be in isolation from the world or indifferent to it. Christians must be in the world, in a struggle to "enhance the good and diminish the evil" (Wolterstorff,1989, cited in Hull, 1993, p. 63).

Central to the Reformed view is the theme of transformation. This theme along with two others, conformation and isolation, make up the three ways in which Christians have historically viewed the world (VanBrummelen, 1986). To describe all three orientations to their extremes one could say that the conformists view their Christianity as very personal, separating their public life from their spiritual life. Their spiritual life does not necessarily speak to the issues they deal with daily. They have little trouble being in the world, taking their place and enjoying everything it has to offer. This conformist orientation is often embraced by students (Kaufman, 1992). Isolationists, on the other hand, will pull completely out of society. The world for them is evil and must be avoided. The transformist seeks to change the world.

The attempts to do good are not merely a series of deeds strung together that might signify Christian living. As well, doing good is not a part of a works righteousness mentality, a thinking that says you must earn your salvation through the doing of good works. Good works reflect a world and life view that says "this is God's will for my life." God has sent his son into the world to make

all things new, including me. Out of sheer gratitude and out of love Jesus Christ, I do good works. The deeds I do reflect what I believe. It is similar for someone from the Jewish faith or for someone who is a humanist. Undoubtedly their deeds reflect their way of life. Living the life of a Christian or a Jew or a Humanist will affect one's whole being.

The goal then for a Christian teacher is to teach all courses from a Christian perspective. This perspective is one that uses the "glasses of scripture." Since our whole being is wrapped up in our faith, a Christian teacher cannot help but to teach from a Christian perspective. As well, the Christian school is not declared Christian simply because it includes religious courses in the curriculum. As we said, "one's religion gives meaning and direction to one's whole life and not just to what the western world has often mistakenly restricted religion to, those activities that are associated with the institutional church (DeGraaff, 1968, cited in Hull, 1993). Everything we are and everything we do is driven by our faith. God has claimed all areas of life, history, math, business, industrial arts, physical education etc. Nothing is left out. Everything is to be submitted to God's judgment and worked on until Christ returns.

The essence of being Reformed is to be constantly reforming and transforming, a recognition of the fact that there is brokenness in the world. As well, new things are constantly challenging the Christian. The question that should be asked often is, "are these things of the Lord or must they be rejected?" The Christian's task could possibly be summed up by saying that they must try to bring a "piece of heaven" to earth in all they attempt to do. This piece of heaven could come in the form of big things, like persuading politicians

to allow scripture to guide their decision making, or in the form of little things, like helping out a neighbour.

Visioning for "Reformed" Christian Schools

Visioning for Christian Schools is a task that many in the Reformed tradition do not take lightly. Recently, several discussions have taken place in CSI schools that have centered around vision. In the summers of 1986, 1987, and 1988 several teachers, administrators, professors, and pastors came to Chicago in an attempt to define what it is that makes up a Christian school. The culmination of these conferences was a book entitled, Twelve Affirmations (1989). The book became the basis for vision discussions in several CSI schools, including ECHS.

In the summer of 1992 a conference was held in Toronto entitled "Focusing the Vision." Many teachers, pastors, board members, and administrators attended this conference in the hopes of gaining insights and strategies that could be used to allow their own schools to be identified as distinct Christian schools of the Reformed persuasion.

The following paragraphs discuss some of the ways people, involved in Reformed Christian education, thought these schools should develop. Each method represents an approach to teaching that will enable and encourage students to embrace a Christian lifestyle. This lifestyle would include an active participation in transforming the world. One would probably see varying degrees of each method in Christian CSI schools across Canada. It would be present in the curriculum, the teaching, and the governance structure.

In the first method is "Christian Traditionalist" thinking (DeBoer, 1993). Christian traditionalists emphasize developing intellect and reason, along with encountering knowledge. The intent is to give students an intellectual background to deal with life's issues, in the hopes that these students will be able to leave school and take up the task of transforming the world. Schools are to train the Christian mind.

A second orientation that emerged was called "Christian Progressive" thinking (DeBoer, 1993). Its emphasis was on developing "heart," cultivating the learner's responses, and on growth and development. Students were confronted with social and justice issues, and challenged to make decisions concerning these issues based on the Bible. As well, students were challenged to get personally involved in these justice issues by confronting politicians, visiting old age homes, or by doing other community service projects. (To express this method, ECHS has its grade eleven students work in the community for three days each year. The students work at the local Youth Emergency shelter or a local home for mentally challenged people.) The most important theme in this tradition is that students begin working on transforming the world while they are students. Academics will play a secondary or supportive role.

More recently a group of educators have attempted to synthesize the two views. Their ideas are defined, by DeBoer (1993, p.3), as revisionist. The revisionists have made a valuable contribution to the Christian vision for education. Much of the recent literature (Beversluis, 1981, DeBoer 1993, Stronks & Blomberg, 1993, VanBrummelen, 1988, VanDyke 1985, Wolterstorff, 1980) has focused on this view as the path that Christian schools

should follow. The key phrase describing this view is "responsive discipleship." The term seems to capture this synthesis and explains what, in the view of the revisionists, Christian schooling should be.

A responsive disciple suggests an actor who is knowledgeable, critically reflective and contemplative, sensitive and aware, involved, and accountable (DeBoer 1993, p. 17). A Christian school, according to this view, should be nurturing responsive disciples of Jesus Christ within a community of learning. A Christian school should be cultivating habits of the heart and mind as well as the hands. It is about disclosing to the learner through the "glasses of faith," something of the richness of God's revelation of himself and his world, for the sake of our living the Christian life (p. 17). Henry Beversluis (1981), in his book Christian Philosophy of Education, describes it this way. He speaks of a religious vision for education that goes beyond personal piety and private morality to a "comprehensive life orientation" (p. 17).

Educating for responsive discipleship directs schools to build a culture in which students are encouraged to discover and develop the gifts they have within a caring community. With their gifts, students, along with teachers, are encouraged to seek "shalom" in this world. "Shalom" would be described as "seeking Biblical peace and justice that heals brokenness and restores creation to what God intended it to be" (Stronks & Blomberg, 1993, p.29). "In seeking this shalom students would become conservers, discerners, and reformers within the Kingdom contours of the Bible" (p.18). Students would be conservers by preserving and passing on the story and the world view of their tradition, discerners by a critical discerning of the spirits of our time, and reformers by transforming this world to a new and better one (p.18).

Teaching Christianly involves a process of guiding, unfolding, and enabling (VanDyke, 1985). In guiding students, teachers model the Christian life and direct students toward the right goals. Teachers also motivate, encourage, and lead students towards a life of service for Jesus Christ. Formal devotional activities remind us of God's presence in our lives, of his love for us, and lead us to a deeper awareness of our love for the Lord. In unfolding, teachers disclose the creation, the effects of sin, and the redemptive patterns open to the Christian. Unfolding means to open up creation. In enabling, teachers empower the student to be an active and competent participant in the transforming of this world while in school and in the future.

The definition of a "responsive disciple," as being knowledgeable, critically reflective and contemplative, sensitive and aware, involved and accountable, is a broad one. It is difficult to apply these attributes in the day-to-day activities of school life. Teachers inevitably begin to emphasize different ways to achieve the goal of teaching for responsive discipleship. Some continue to stress habits of the mind and others habits of the heart. School boards, parents, and students can all have different opinions of what should be emphasized. The board may want the school to emphasize academics or discipline, parents may want to see an emphasis on student behaviour or student expressions of a personal faith commitment to Jesus Christ. The issues can become complicated.

Christian Schools: A Different Look

Of the three orientations isolationism, transformationist, and conformist, most Christian school principals from CSI schools will tell you that their school

embraces transformational thinking as the orientation they model and teach (Kaufman, 1992 & Hull, 1993). There is some evidence to suggest, however, that parents are more inclined towards isolating their children from the evils of the world rather than encouraging them to participate in changing it (Vryhof, 1991 cited in Hull 1993). In isolating their children there may be a good chance that they learn proper Christian morals with a sprinkling of Bible knowledge, make a personal commitment to Jesus Christ, and be protected from an evil world. It is the parents' desire to ease children into society slowly, by means of a protectionist school environment. Discipline, a basic education, and an obvious Bible curriculum, are central to this theme. Kaufman (1992) refers to these people as Pietistic Dualists; dualistic in the sense that spiritual knowing and academic knowing are essentially unrelated, pious in the sense that what makes Christian schools Christian are the Bible courses and devotions.

Central to the stated vision of most CSI schools is the theme of transformation. Parents, on the other hand, may be more interested in protecting their children from the world than having them learn how to change it. These two visions have created tension between schools and parents. To avoid the tension Christian schools may have lost sight of any vision. Aside from a few expressions more related to schooling in general (e.g., the atmosphere of a small school or teachers who see their work as a calling), some CSI schools may have simply become a school similar to schools of the state (Hull, 1993, p. 100).

The Vision For ECHS

The vision statement for ECHS (1985) reflects a Reformed vision for education. There is an acknowledgement of the Lordship of Jesus Christ over all things, of the barrier presented to all people because of sin, and of the saving and redeeming work of Jesus with his death on the cross. The theme of creation, fall, redemption is clear. There is also a clear message to students and the rest of the supporting community that everyone should be involved in transforming the world.

The ECHS mission statement can also be identified with "revisionist thinking." The statement includes expressions of a Reformed world and life view that encourages students to develop value judgments grounded in a knowledge of God, an understanding of ourselves, a knowledge of our relationship to others and the world, and in an acknowledgement of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The school is also to promote sound scholarship, an earnest effort, and an obligation for students to use their talents in a context of a Christian world and life view. ECHS is to provide opportunities to experience and apply student learning to Christian action and service. The overall aim is to prepare students to live responsive and productive lives of faith to the Glory of God in contemporary society. There is an emphasis on cultivating habits of the heart, mind, and hand.

ECHS sees the primary responsibility for education belonging to the parents. What ECHS does in the school is to complement the home and the church. The school is seen as a community where Christian love and concern are central values. Parents, students, teachers, and the supporting community

are to be valued as integral parts in the operation of the school. Collegiality among teachers is seen as an imperative.

ECHS has a well-defined mission statement that can be referenced to the literature on Christian School vision and to Reformed Perspective. The question of whether or not vision and practice are in harmony has to be discussed by the ECHS community. There is increasing pressure to identify what the school is all about. Parents, who may only have a financial relationship with the school, are concerned that they get their monies worth. If the school isn't different it wouldn't be worth it to send their children to ECHS. Other parents, parents who have more than a financial relationship to the school and are intimately involved with the school, are also expressing concern that the school is not meeting their children's needs. A discussion of these expressions will follow as we contemplate studies that have been conducted with regard to parent and student satisfaction with schools.

To set the stage for this discussion I will present the context within which the school community is working. Many challenges serve as barriers to producing alternative Christian education. The challenges also serve as influences for parents, students, and teachers as they contemplate whether or not ECHS is meeting their needs.

CSI Schools and ECHS in a Canadian Private School Context

Enrolments in private schools in Canada have been on the rise in the last 25 years (Hollaar, 1989). The increased enrolment in private or Christian schools in Canada is an indication that these schools are fulfilling a need, and satisfying parents and students. In 1970-71, 142,601 students, or 2.4% of the

national total, were enrolled in private schools in Canada. In 1989-90, 233, 873 students, or 4.6% of the total population, were enrolled. In April 1994, 258,359 students, or 5% of the national total, were enrolled. Although most of the students enrolled in private schools were in Quebec and Ontario, the Western provinces have also seen steady growth in recent years. Private school enrolments in the four Western provinces in September 1994 was 79,191. This represented an increase of 8.4% over the previous five years. (FISC, 1994 & CEA Information Note, 1992, Feb.).

Although enrolments have increased steadily in private schools, ECHS has not experience the same rate of growth. Enrolments at ECHS have remained steady at around 165 students over the last five years. There is concern that ECHS, having a long history, may need to refine, articulate, and practice a vision that is distinct and satisfying.

There is some evidence that suggests that the dominant public school majority has infiltrated the CSI Christian schools to the point where they no longer offer alternatives but are just so much more of the same thing. Bergen, (1992) citing R.M. Stamp, points out that private schools in Ontario can no longer be called schools of protest or alternative schools, but like their public school counterparts, they have become schools of Ontario (p.16). Government control of finances, teacher certification, and curricula, as well as a pervasive attitude that private education will fragment society, where people will no longer be given equal opportunity, or learn respect for one another, exacerbates the private, alternative school's challenge. Hull (1994), in his investigation of Christian CSI schools in Ontario, argues that these schools have been so influenced by the "deep structure of schooling that, on the whole, there is

nothing distinctively Christian in OACS (Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools) schools in terms of curriculum, pedagogy, evaluation procedure, the system of schooling, or the outward lifestyle it promotes (p.100). Hull insists that CSI schools in Ontario must begin a process of reform or they will become ineffective schools. The concern may be legitimate for ECHS as well.

Challenges Facing Christian Schools Today

Offering alternative, Christian education is not a simple task. To understand the difficulties Christian schools are faced with, we have to examine the greater context within which Christian schools are placed. This context has placed constraints on schools like ECHS that inhibit its ability to offer alternative education. It is not my intention to point to these constraints as excuses for Christian schools becoming merely schools of the province, but they are an indication of the tremendous challenge. They serve to give parents and students a different basis from which they place judgments on their school. This basis has undoubtedly influenced many parents' and students' ideas of what the vision for ECHS should be.

As mentioned earlier, the biggest challenge to Christian schools is the public school monopoly (Stronks & Blomberg, 1993). One need only look at the amounts of money offered to public schools and those offered to private schools across Canada. Although levels of funding differ from province to province, it cannot be denied that parents who send their children to Christian schools often do so at great financial sacrifice. In the province of Alberta, Christian schools are given approximately $1,600 per student in provincial grants. The average cost of educating one student in Alberta is about $5,800.

Because of lower teacher salaries, a lot of volunteer work, and fewer frills, ECHS is able to run at a cost of approximately $4,000 per student. Of course the difference between provincial funding and the cost per student is made up through tuition fees. In Ontario, where no provincial funding is available, parents pay tuition fees that can range from $5,000 - $12,000 per family. Parents who have children in both the high school and an elementary school in Ontario often pay double tuition. Christian, CSI High Schools in Ontario operate under boards that are not usually connected to the elementary school. In Alberta four of the five CSI, high schools operate under the same board as the elementary schools.

The second challenge identified by Stronks and Blomberg (1993) has to do with the sub-culture of schooling. They argue that this sub culture, or what Hull (1993) refers to as "the deep structure of schooling," is a powerful obstacle that inhibits schools like ECHS from practising what they preach. The sub-culture generally places schools in a position of having to attend to academic training, vocational training, citizenship training, and self-actualization (Boyer, 1985, cited in Hull, 1993). Schools are to provide these types of training so that students will be equipped for the world of work and become responsible citizens. There is little emphasis on transforming the world. The sub-culture leads one to be concerned that students will be eligible to get into university or college and have the skills necessary to be able to conform to the world and make a good living.

A key ingredient in the sub-culture of schooling is competition (Stronks & Blomberg, 1993). Students respond as individual learners in an attempt to score higher on tests and exams than their fellow students. Grading isn't really

an indication of how much the student knows but merely shows a rank ordering of students. The curriculum is prescribed and taught to see which students can best master the material (Hull, 1993). Excellence is determined by achievement and parents are quick to point this out when their child, in their view, isn't performing well in school. In this type of sub-culture it is difficult to make the school community aware of a different way to define excellence. This should be a way that shows that students are individuals and are not to be compared to everyone else.

This challenge leads us into another challenge identified by Stronks & Blomberg (1993). This challenge is individualism. Students and teachers, while at school, seem to be in a world that advocates being alone. Teachers often teach with their doors closed and because of competition students often learn alone. Students in my classes have often refused, or at least strongly argued against, working in groups. The fear of being dragged down by the weakest student in the group was greatly feared. Grading in group work did, however, often rely on the final piece of work handed in. There was little or no concern given to the process. In informal discussions that I have had with teachers at ECHS and in other schools about group work, the experiences were similar. The students in my class had a point.

The last challenge identified by Stronks & Blomberg (1993) has to do with social and ecological decline. Child abuse, family breakdown, economic pressures, all contribute to children coming to school with emotional and psychological concerns that need to be attended to. Social and ecological issues makes one aware that we are dramatically connected to these problems through our students.

It should be painfully obvious that the challenges mentioned here are not restricted to Christian schools. The sub-culture of schooling, individualism, competition, and the many social problems are being dealt with everywhere and in every school system. Perhaps the Christian school, because of its vision of being an institution that seeks to bring about transformation, feels a more profound responsibility in this area. Whereas public schools have a vision for making sure their students take their places in society, Christian schools hope their students will change society.

Other Studies Done Concerning Satisfaction with Christian Schools

Of the few studies done related to parent and student satisfaction with Christian schools, four were identified as having significant relevance to this study. The first one was a study done by the staff and administration of West Edmonton Christian School (WECS,1994) in which they asked their supporting community about their levels of satisfaction with the school. (WECS, along with Northeast Christian school, make up the main feeder schools for ECHS. The three schools together make up the Edmonton Society for Christian Education.) The second was an evaluation done in December of 1989 of ECHS by Alberta Education. The third was a study, conducted by John Hull in 1993 of Ontario schools, and the fourth was a study conducted by Steven Kaufman in 1991 of CSI and ACSI (Association of Christian Schools International) schools in the United States. The following is a discussion of the findings in these studies.

West Edmonton Christian School

The West Edmonton Christian School, a K-9 school, recently conducted a study in which they sent questionnaires to all the parents who were sending children to their school (West School Study, May, 1994). The study included a complete survey of many school related issues. 180 questionnaires were sent out, one to each home. 85 questionnaires were returned. There was not indication as whether or not the questionnaire was filled out by the mother or father. There was also no indication as to whether or not the questionnaires were from parents of students in grades K-6 or from the junior high. Preliminary analysis suggests that the parents are generally satisfied with the school. However, they did indicate a desire for increased discipline, some curriculum changes, especially in the area of language arts, and an increased effort in the area of student special needs. Parents stated that they were satisfied with the vision of the school but there was an indication that the way in which the school practised its vision, could be improved. Discipline, or the lack of it, teacher conduct, and curriculum were identified as aspects that indicated whether or not WECS was clearly a Christian school. Parents indicated that the junior high classes seemed out of control at times and they indicated that, in their view, this should not happen in a Christian school.

The questionnaire also provided parents with the opportunity to give written responses to questions concerning philosophy and vision, curriculum, pedagogy, student conduct and discipline, teacher conduct, communication, special needs, facilities, and extra-curricular activities. Although many comments dealt with practical issues like communication, report cards, and curriculum, several other comments were made that dealt with the Christian

emphasis at the school. A variety of concerns were expressed. Five comments specified the need for a clearer definition of the vision as it related to specifics in the curriculum. One such comment was very specific and requested a clearer definition of the Reformed vision. Two comments noted that the implementation of the philosophy varied from teacher to teacher. Five comments requested that greater priority be given to the practice of prayer, personal testimony, and Bible stories. One comment expressed the need for a statement of witness or service to the community.

On the positive side, parents noted at least fifteen times that they were very satisfied with the way in which the philosophy was stated and practised. Two of the fifteen comments, expressed satisfaction with the way in which teachers were able to integrate faith and learning. The rest of the comments were not specific in their expression of how the philosophy was carried out.

In further analysis of the comments several things emerge. First of all, it appears that there are various ideas among the staff, at least from the parents perspective, about vision implementation. As well, parents have differing ideas on how the vision is to be practised. Some parents expressed satisfaction with the Christian direction but were more concerned that there be high academic standards. Such comments are consistent with the conformist theme. One comment, expressing a need for a statement of mission or service, and the comments regarding the integration of faith and learning, can be categorized as transformational, a theme consistent with Reformed thinking.

Two areas in the questionnaire that raised several interesting comments had to do with discipline and teacher conduct. In both areas one was left with the impression that they were central to these parents' perception of what a

Christian school should be. Fourteen of the 85 questionnaires indicated a real need for the school to be firm, consistent, and willing to administer consequences for poor behaviour. Several of these comments were expressed passionately. Twice it was mentioned that firm discipline was very important in showing Christianity. Parents who expressed this sentiment seemed to be of the understanding that strict consequences would curb inappropriate behaviour. Other parents encouraged the school to educate students in proper behaviour. Eight comments suggested various methods for behaviour education. Nine comments expressed satisfaction with the present rules and procedures for discipline and five comments were made that referred to discipline and student behaviour as issues that needed community support.

Some intense responses were provoked by the conduct of some teachers. Generally parents expressed their satisfaction with the teachers as positive role models for their children. However, some concern was expressed over the lifestyle of some teachers, especially with regard to church attendance and the promotion of traditional family values. Teachers were commended for the amount of time they spent on extra curricular activities.

In conclusion it seems safe to say that parents, in spite of a positive feeling for the school, had a difficult time articulating specifically what it was that made WECS distinctly Christian. Often schools may point to a close, caring environment and dedicated teachers, but these points did not come up very often. Instead parents said that there needed to be more consistent and firm discipline, better teacher role models, and improved student behaviour to improve the Christian emphasis at the school. These themes are more consistent with an isolationist orientation and not the stated transformational

vision. Perhaps if pressed, parents, who wrote down general positive comments, would be able to state more clearly what it is that gives them this positive outlook.

Edmonton Christian High School - 1989

In 1989, at the request of ECHS, Alberta Education put a team of evaluators together to take a look at every aspect of ECHS. Eight evaluators visited the school over four days, visiting classrooms, interviewing parents and students, and generally observing how the school ran. The evaluation's steering committee also had several parents, students, teachers, and graduates fill out questionnaires to obtain input. The evaluation dealt with school administration, curriculum, school climate, student development, facilities, and support services.

The results of the surveys clearly showed that the students and parents were generally very satisfied with the school. Students were happy to attend school as they perceived the teachers to be caring and helpful and they generally enjoyed the school climate. Parents concurred with their children's perceptions and overwhelmingly appreciated the Christ-centred education present at the school. The negative comments made by parents and students dealt mainly with facilities.

The comments regarding Christ-centred education were interesting. I attempted to come to an understanding of the type of Christian school parents and students desired by coding all of the comments made concerning the Christian emphasis. Again, the three orientations towards Christian living -conformist, isolationist, and transformational- were used as the coding

reference. Comments made that separated academic subjects and faith in a way that saw an emphasis on academics and a brief reference to Christianity in the curriculum, were placed within the conformist group. Comments that dealt with increased emphasis on prayer, conversion, Bible classes, stricter discipline procedures, and Christian atmosphere were placed within the isolationist group. Transformational comments included items such as integration of faith and learning, teaching all courses from a Christian perspective, and comments that expressed an appreciation for challenging students to deal with issues from a Christian perspective.

Parents made 41 comments regarding Christ-centred education. Several comments were difficult to categorize because they were very general and had no context. The simple mention of Christ centred education does little to flesh out what is important for that parent. Of the 41 comments, 25 were categorized. Of the 25 comments eleven were categorized as transformational, six were isolationist, five were conformist and three were placed in both the isolationist and transformational. The tension between the three mindsets may very well exist at ECHS. It may be important to facilitate discussions that reveal the distinctions in orientation that are emerging. The discussions may go a long way towards providing a harmonious vision.

Three comments showed concern for ECHS and its lack of emphasis on student spiritual growth. These parents grasped the importance of the transformational character of the school but displayed some dissatisfaction with the lack of emphasis on development of the heart. This is an area where we find an overlap between the transformational orientation and the isolationist oreintation. Schools from the Reformed tradition may tend to de-emphasize, in

practice, the development of a heart commitment and emphasize matters of the mind and hand. It is often assumed that the students have made personal commitments to Christ and are quite willing to begin with the challenges of transforming. Although there may be less emphasis on cultivating a heart commitment, the vision for schools from the Reformed tradition do not officially ignore it. These schools do not see themselves as being primarily in the business of evangelism.

Students were also quite articulate in their comments concerning the Christian emphasis in the school. Of the 20 comments that were specific enough to be categorized, 15 of them could be put in the conformist group. Most students saw the Christian emphasis as being sprinkled on the curriculum. None of the comments made by students indicated that they were aware of or able to embrace ideas concerning the transformational character of the school. Students were very appreciative of the high academic standards and of the close relationships among themselves and with the teachers. They felt these relationships came as a result of caring committed teachers and because ECHS was a small school. Students saw these close relationships and caring teachers as important to what makes up a Christian school.

Generally, teachers did embrace the mission statement of the school in their comments, with words like holistic and integration, but four comments showed some frustration with an inconsistent sense of this transformational character. One teacher expressed a need to introduce a service component into every grade (presently only a grade eleven service project exists) and another teacher expressed a desire to have more teachers with a Christian

college background, indicating a desire for a more consistent application of the vision.

CSI and ACSI Schools in the United States

In 1991 Steven Kaufman visited fifteen selected schools in thirteen different states. Although his study was not designed to discover parent and student satisfaction but to investigate the degree of parent and student ownership of the mission of these schools, the study is still relevant in that it reveals several of the same orientations towards Christian schools that were found in the studies done at WECS and ECHS. His findings were presented at the "Focus on the Vision" conference held in Toronto in 1992.

Kaufman discovered that there was very little consensus among administrators, faculty, and students regarding the mission of the school. Although administration, teachers and students clearly understood that a Biblical perspective throughout the curriculum was important, little agreement existed with regard to what "Biblical perspective" entailed. Students considered caring teachers of utmost importance. Teachers defined Christian perspective in terms of Christian environment, an environment that was often described in spiritual terms, terms consistent with a pietistic dualist thought frame. The transformational character of the Reformed perspective came up in only 8% of teachers' responses. For Kaufman an example of a transformational response was: "To educate students from a Biblical perspective, and to prepare them to influence culture and society for Christ" (Kaufman, 1991, p.7).

Students and teachers also made several comments concerning the success of their schools. Teachers seemed very discouraged and dissatisfied

with what was happening. They felt betrayed by parents and felt that a strict application of the rules, tighter admission policies that would deter entrance to students with behavioural problems, and more parental support would help to solve their problems. Students wanted more freedom, fewer rules, and changes that would help student/student and student/teacher relationships. The changes that students and teachers advocated were important but did not reflect a fundamental questioning of the direction of the school. Neither teachers nor students appeared to embrace the vision for schools and instead were content to deal with issues like school rules, admission policies, and student/teacher relationships, items that were more a part of the subculture or deep structure of schooling.

Kaufman concluded that, although the transformational rhetoric was there, transformational practice was absent. The curriculum was essentially secular, with some Christian sprinkles. Students were not receiving a culturally relevant understanding of Christianity in any significant way (Kaufman 1991, p 18).

CSI Schools of Ontario - The OACS (Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools)

The study completed by John Hull (1993) of eight OACS high schools revealed essentially the same findings as Kaufman's studies. Administrators could clearly articulate the transformational mission of their school, but, when examined more closely, this vision was rarely seen in practice. Teachers and students defined Christian Education as having a Christian perspective in all areas of life, but what this meant was not sufficiently clear. OACS schools were characterized by a safe and secure environment, as evidenced by high teacher

job satisfaction and student optimism, but there was little that was distinctively Christian in terms of curriculum, pedagogy, evaluation procedures, school governance, or the outward lifestyle the schools promoted. Students and teachers were, however, quite satisfied with the schools. It appeared that most teachers were so busy with the day-to-day busyness of schooling that they had little time left to pursue a common Reformed vision for their school. It also became clear that, for students, the Reformed vision was simply a perspective, a way of seeing things, and not a holistic way of life or world view. What was important for students was caring teachers, a Christian environment, getting good grades, college acceptance, and future financial success. All are aspects of a school of the conformist orientation. All are aspects that also emerged in the WECS study, the ECHS study, and in the study done by Kaufman. Again, all have more to do with the sub-culture of schooling and a conformist orientation than with the Reformed transformational theme described in their mission statements.

Other Studies Completed in the Area of Student and Parent Satisfaction

In a study done by the North York Board of Education (1981), an attempt was made to discover why students left public schools and moved to private schools and vice-versa. Three hundred and six parents were interviewed by telephone or asked to fill out a questionnaire. There was roughly a 50/50 split between those leaving the public schools and those coming into the public schools. The study had three foci: perceived problems in the public schools, gains or losses resulting from the transfer, and suggestions for change.

The most common reasons given for the change to private schools were: a genuine desire for Christian religious education, higher academic standards, and better discipline. Eighty-nine percent of parents believed that their children gained something from the transfer to private schools. Two of the main concerns of parents who took their children out of private schools were concerned with the distance to the private school and the need for a higher academic standard. The problems parents experienced with the private schools were that the schools were too far from home and that there was not enough emphasis on academics. Eighty four percent of the parents felt that the students had gained from the transfer to the public schools (North York Board of Education, 1981).

Although this study surveyed those who had changed school systems some conclusions are helpful for this review. There is evidence that parents were dissatisfied with discipline procedures in the public school. It appears that private schools were seen as institutions that had stricter discipline procedures. The West Edmonton Christian School study indicates that strict discipline is also a priority for those parents who send their children there. As well, North York parents who moved their children into private schools seemed to indicate agreement with a Christian philosophy or vision of education.

The Society for Christian Education in Edmonton has, on an ongoing basis, sought information, informally, from its supporting community regarding their level of satisfaction with the schools. Information on the schools' ability to teach from a Christian perspective has always been an important part of these inquiries. The studies have provided a variety of responses. The most recent of these studies was conducted using a telephone survey of parents who had

removed their children from schools belonging to the Society. The study was conducted in 1993 by the board of the Edmonton Society for Christian Education. Concerns expressed by these parents included tuition costs, discipline, transportation, teacher conduct, and program offerings (Board minutes, Oct. 1993). It was clear from the studies that all was not well with the schools. Some of these concerns, (e.g. discipline and teacher influences on children) were identified as issues that affected the way the Christian vision was practised in the schools.

Lee Hollaar (1989) conducted a study that, among other things, looked at the CRC schools and how their governance structures demonstrated the community's espoused values. Hollaar looked at the faith assumptions of the CRC community, gave a historical overview of the community, and then looked at whether or not the governance structures of the school reflected these faith assumptions. Hollaar completed five interviews with people who were intimately connected with the governance structures and drew his conclusions. Hollaar (1989) found that faith did influence Christian school governance but that there were also gaps of unfaithfulness (p.235). Some expressions given in the interviews were, in Hollaar's view, very secular. The people he interviewed talked of governing bodies that made decisions that were based on pragmatism and not on the Reformed vision that they espoused. Hollaar notes that "the presence of an ongoing secularization process seems unanimous throughout the portraits" (p. 257). Hollaar also says,

> rhetoric and general slogans abound; their translation into governance practices and structures remains spotty. When one scrutinizes Christian schools, all too often one does not find the embodiment of noble ideals of the Christian alternative perspectives. The five portraits testify to the discontinuity of

> practice following confession. What one finds is often a secular perspective to which are attached piecemeal supplements or correctives (p.261).

Hollaar's findings are consistent with those of Kaufman and Hull. The evidence suggests that Christian schools, in spite of their rhetoric, don't practice what they preach.

Conclusions

Overall the literature seems to indicate varying levels of satisfaction with the Christian direction of the schools discussed. Parents do seem to indicate general approval for the degree to which the schools put their Christian vision into practice but when looking for details as to what is being practised, very little consensus emerges. Caring teachers, a Christian environment, discipline, and a small school atmosphere have all contributed to general school satisfaction. Parents were interested in good role models for their children, adequate, formal, devotional activities, and in opportunities for their children to develop positive Christian friendships. Some parents expressed concern with extra-curricular activities and others applauded teacher efforts in extra-curricular activities.

All of the above are significant aspects of Christian schools. The extent to which parents and students are satisfied with these aspects at ECHS is the focus of the survey done for this study. The Kaufman, Hull, and Hollaar studies also focused very much on whether or not parents, students, and teachers were able to practice or embrace what the mission statements of the schools preached. Their conclusions were that very little of what was done at the schools revealed the central mission in the vision statements. The schools tended to be very similar to public schools. Open-ended questions on the

questionnaire and the results of interviews in this study were analyzed to see if ECHS falls short in the same way as the schools mentioned in the Kaufman, Hull, and Hollaar studies. The analysis identifies the extent to which parents and students are satisfied with how ECHS practices what it preaches.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Research Design

The intent of this study was to discover the level of satisfaction with the Christian direction at ECHS. The population includes parents, graduates, students, teachers, and other supporters of ECHS.

The study design included a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The sample included: (a) grade 12 students and their parents, (b) fourth year graduates and their parents, and (c) teachers at ECHS. Teacher responses were used to triangulate the results with those of the parents and the students. The information was gathered by using questionnaires and follow-up interviews. Students, parents, and teachers received slightly different questionnaires, but all dealt with the extent to which ECHS has been successful in affecting student lives and in implementing its school vision.

The questionnaires were developed with the help of several individuals and by looking at similar studies. The people sought out for help included other administrators, the chief executive officer for The Association for Alternate and Independent Schools and Colleges of Alberta, and the Christian Schools International District 11 curriculum coordinator. The questionnaires were scrutinized by members of the Edmonton Society for Christian Education and by teachers at ECHS to ensure that all areas were covered and to ensure that ambiguities were removed. The questionnaires were pilot tested on a random sample of five students, three teachers and five parents from the sample population. All respondents in the pilot were asked if they had any difficulties with the questionnaires. The data collected in the field test were coded and

analyzed to see if ambiguities existed. The questions were amended as needed to increase clarity.

The pilot study provided several hints that allowed some changes to be made in the construction of the questionnaire and in the interview schedule. The order of the questions was changed and one question, a question on whether or not teachers provided satisfactory positive attention to students' opinions, was added. The interview schedule was amended somewhat to allow for more discussion. It was originally designed as a fairly structured face-to-face interview. It quickly became clear that such an interview would not allow for the free flow of information. The interview was then constructed as a semi-structured face to face conversation.

Data Collection

The sample was invited to fill out the questionnaires. The questionnaires made use of a Likert type scale which was found useful in collecting the quantitative data. As well, the questionnaires included some open ended questions that were useful in collecting qualitative data. (See Appendix A for a copy of the student questionnaire)

Students who presently attend ECHS filled out the questionnaire during their class time. These questionnaires were administered by one of their teachers. The teacher was given clear instructions concerning the administration of these questionnaires. Parents and graduates received a questionnaire in the mail. The parents received one questionnaire per household. These questionnaires were accompanied by a covering letter (see appendix A) and a return envelope. In total, 47 students and their parents, 45

graduates and their parents, and 13 teachers were asked to participate in the study. The graduate and parents of graduates numbers do not represent the total sample for these groups. The class of 1991 had a total of 55 graduates. Although an effort was made to reach all of these graduates, it was not possible to do so. The same could be said of the parents of these graduates. The number of teachers, students, and the parents of these students does represent the total sample for their groups. The actual number of respondents was 44 students, 16 graduates, 19 parents, 12 parents of graduates, and 8 teachers.

The type of data collected related to several aspects of the school; ECHS' overall influence on Christian living, specific course contributions, extra-curricular activities, teacher influence, discipline procedures, teacher evaluations of students, student behaviour, and formal worship activities. All the questions that were asked focused on whether or not the school's practice, in these areas, reflected the respondent's perception of what a Christian school should be doing. The questionnaires had a combination of closed (section 1) and open (section 2) ended questions. The comments received in the open ended section were used to gather more specific information. Whereas the first section of the questionnaires was meant to determine the degree of satisfaction of the respondents the second section provided the reasons for this degree.

Upon return of the questionnaires, follow-up interviews, with a random sample of 4 parents and 7 students, were conducted. This random sample was determined by drawing the names out of a hat.

The follow-up interviews followed the same line of questioning as the questionnaires but probing questions were used to further explore the comments made. The interview began with an explanation of the study and an

with an assurance that complete confidentiality would be maintained. The data is described in this study using pseudonyms. Respondents were asked about things that both satisfied and dissatisfied them about the school. This question usually led into a discussion of the various aspects of schooling, i.e. discipline, extra-curricular activities, and teacher/student relationships. The interview was closed by asking the respondents for advice on how to give ECHS a stronger identity as a Christian school. This last question often led into a discussion of the type of Christian Education the respondent felt was consistent with their own faith and traditions.

Limitations

1. The study is limited because a claim cannot be made that a direct cause/effect relationship existed between attendance at a Christian school and the subsequent living of a Christian life. Peers, parents, churches, and environment all play important roles in this development. To separate them is impossible. It will always be maintained that the school can only play its part in guiding children in a Christian life together with parents, the church, and the community. The research question is concerned with whether or not ECHS is playing its part to the satisfaction of students and parents.
2. The study may be limited by virtue of the intrusion of unknown extraneous variables. For example, dissatisfaction with the school may be the result of having had to pay high tuition fees. It is often difficult to admit that one may be having financial problems and it may be easier to express dissatisfaction with the Christian direction of the school. Another extraneous variable may be that dissatisfaction may come as a result of poor facilities or bad grades.

Comments about the Christian direction of the school may be more a reflection of the extraneous variables than of the vision for the school. In an attempt to account for these extraneous variables, questions were asked that required respondents to deal very specifically with aspects of the school that directly affected the Christian Vision for the school. However, it remains a limitation.

3. The choosing of the class of 1991 was not a random selection. ECHS is a small school. Teachers often talk about whole classes being either an easy group or a real challenge. The classes of 1992 and 1993 were considered excellent groups. If these groups would have been selected, chances are the responses would have been quite different. The class of 1991 was one group that was mixed, in the sense that it included both challenging and easy to handle students. The fact that the group was not randomly selected and that they all came from the same graduating year are limitations.

Delimitations

1. This study chose to look only at the Christian direction of the many facets of schooling.
2. The historical context within which the school is placed has not been researched in detail. The comments were taken at face value and not analyzed within a historical context.
3. The data were collected from respondents who were closely connected to the school. No one from the CRC community, whose children did not attend ECHS were asked to participate in the study.

Data Analysis

Themes were constructed deductively from the literature and were allowed to emerge inductively from the data. Phrases were taken from the statements on the questionnaires and in the interviews and categorized according to theme. These phrases were also divided according to whether or not the response was negative, positive, or neutral. The frequency of the referral to each theme was also determined.

The quantitative data were counted and organized in a way that allowed for easy analysis. The question, as with all the questions on the questionnaire, came in the form of a statement. Respondents were asked if they were highly dissatisfied (HD), dissatisfied (D), uncertain (U), satisfied (S), or highly satisfied (HS) with the feeling of being in a Christian community. If the respondents felt uncomfortable with the statement or had insufficient information they were asked to circle NA (not applicable). Each answer was then awarded a numeric value. HD became a 1, D a 2, U a 3, S a 4 and HS a 5. The frequency of the responses, the mean, and the mode were used to analyze the data. The data were only meant to be descriptive. No statistical comparisons were made between the groups.

Validity, the extent to which what was measured was actually what I had intended to measure and reliability, the extent to which the same conclusions would have been drawn with another study, were tested by using Cook and Campbell's (1979) definitions for what may cause data to be invalid or unreliable. Examples of the definitions would include explication of constructs, mono-operational bias and mono-method bias. To insure that neither of these

definitions would affect validity and reliability two methods of data collection were used.

Chapter 4

Description and Discussion of the Quantitative Data

Introduction

To provide Christian Education that is acceptable, fitting, and satisfactory to an entire supporting community is difficult, if not impossible. There are many ideas about what makes the perfect school, but for private schools it is especially important to try to provide complete satisfaction since, in all provinces in Canada, private or Christian education is funded to a lesser degree than in public schools. As a result, a substantial financial commitment is required on the part of families, churches, and supporting communities. Parents are not just looking for another school for their children. Alternative schools should articulate, embrace, and practice a vision for their schools which is different. If they don't, the purpose for their existence would be unfounded.

As was mentioned earlier, the vision for ECHS is one that has grown out of a Reformed world and life view. ECHS has attempted to model and practice a Reformed vision in every area of schooling. A Reformed vision for curriculum, for student/teacher relationships, in student behaviour, for extracurricular activities, and in seeking to provide students with opportunities to discover what it means to be transformers is what is to make ECHS different. The extent to which these are experienced by students and parents at ECHS is critical in what will make ECHS successful.

The questionnaire dealt with several topics pertaining to the Christian direction at ECHS. Parents, students, and teachers were asked to what degree they were satisfied with the way ECHS was providing Christian direction in relation to these topics. An effort was made to have respondents avoid vague

statements and to encourage them to think about the details of schooling and Christian direction.

The topics discussed and questioned included:

(a) being part of a Christian community
(b) an overall understanding and promotion of a Christian's place in the world,
(c) development of faith life,
(d) teacher/student relationships,
(e) discipline,
(f) evaluation,
(g) behaviour of students,
(h) extra-curricular activities,
(i) the Christian direction within specific courses.

All of the topics were deduced from the literature review.

The quantitative data showed interesting results. Overall the five groups that responded appear to have mixed feelings about ECHS. The groups range somewhere between satisfied and uncertain on most issues. As well, the five groups generally felt the same way about the different issues. In only a couple of areas did one or two of the groups show results that were significantly different than the others.

In this chapter I will describe and discuss the results of the quantitative data in each of the categories just mentioned . The results of the questionnaires are listed in appendix C.

Being Part of a Christian Community

To live in a Christian community is central to the vision statement at ECHS and very important to the question of what makes ECHS a Christian school. When we talk about Christian community several aspects come to mind. These include feelings of mutual respect, whether or not people within

the community all get along, or if there are common ideas on student behaviour or discipline. All of these aspects were dealt with as separate topics.

Teachers and present students felt that Christian community was very evident at ECHS. Thirty-four of the 44 students who responded were either highly satisfied or satisfied with the feelings of Christian community. Parents of present students were the least satisfied with the Christian community and graduates and parents of graduates had mixed feelings and their responses were spread along the grid. The biggest difference existed between the perception of the present parents and those of the teachers. Although present students generally indicated satisfaction with the feelings of community, six students still indicated dissatisfaction with the community feeling.

Overall it appeared that all five groups were satisfied with the community feeling at ECHS. However, many individuals have had negative experiences that resulted in feelings of dissatisfaction. This is evidenced by the fact that six students and three parents of present students did express extreme dissatisfaction with the school in this area. As we continue in this chapter, in discussions on teacher/student relationships, devotional activities etc., the details of the dissatisfaction parents expressed, the negative experiences some students had, and areas that showed ECHS as doing well, will emerge.

An Overall Understanding and Promotion of a Christian's Place in the World

The vision statement at ECHS indicates a concern for students and their ability to take on the challenges of society. These challenges are also to be dealt with in light of scripture. The school's desire is to help students live a Christian life and to be able to do this in the many challenges of life. The

questionnaire basically asked respondents if they were satisfied with the way in which they were prepared for the world.

Of the five groups that responded, graduates were the least sure that what they were taught gave them an understanding of the Christian's role in society. In dealing with world issues, such as social injustice and the environment, all five groups indicated that they were satisfied with the attention given to these issues. When asked about whether or not ECHS prepared students for life as Christians, some graduates were uncertain and dissatisfied. Graduates were also uncertain about the emphasis placed on issues that became important for them in their lives after high school.

Perhaps the group that any school would most like to satisfy, with regard to a question on preparing students for what is important in life, would be the graduates. After all, they are the ones that are on the front lines. Yet, in this study, graduates were the most dissatisfied. They felt prepared to deal with issues pertaining to such things as the environment or general justice issues, but were unprepared for important things about life. Some students who are presently attending ECHS were also beginning to feel unprepared for this real world.

The negative feelings that graduates had about being prepared were not the same feelings that parents had of the school. One could conclude, from the data, that parents feel their children are being adequately prepared for life. The exposure to worldly things that graduates missed is something that parents may be glad doesn't exist. Isolation from worldly things provides a comfort zone that is often important for parents but is a problem for graduates.

On the one hand parents would like to see their children protected from the big bad world; on the other hand graduates are saying that too much isolation or protection will ultimately lead to an inability to cope. As well one must also consider the purpose of Reformed Christian schools. If these schools are to provide education that is transformational in character, isolating students from the world may be counter productive. It would seem logical that if you are going to change the world it would be important to understand it. To strike the appropriate balance would go a long way to increasing satisfaction levels.

In this discussion it is important to be reminded of the history of ECHS. Much of the support that ECHS gets comes from the Christian Reformed Church. Although the church does have several evangelical programs aimed at transforming people and this world, most people from the CRC find their lives are completely centred around the church. In that sense it is a fairly closed community.

I believe this point cannot be underestimated. It would be interesting to see what percentage of CRC people are involved in volunteer work outside their church community. I believe you would find very few of them involved in such things as community sports, hospital volunteer work, or other social clubs. It would also be interesting to know how students and parents, that are not from the Christian Reformed Church, have been accepted within the school community. If the results are consistent I believe these people may have found it difficult to become an integral part of the community.

This type of community may have developed at ECHS and parents may be quite satisfied that their children are part of it. Graduates, on the other hand, seem to indicate that this community is stifling, and that exposure to other

communities may be difficult to handle once one has left the confines of ECHS. If this community is modelled in the churches that many of the students attend, it would be difficult to make changes that would make transformational education more feasible. It appears, from this quantitative data, that isolationist education is preferred by parents and a problem for the graduates.

Development of a Personal Faith Relationship with Christ

To discuss the development of one's faith life, in the Reformed tradition, one inevitably talks about a faith that relates to all areas of life. It's part of the Reformed world and life view that all of life is religion, not just the spiritual side of life. In developing one's faith, a commitment to searching out how that faith relates to politics, economics, social issues, etc., seems logical. Faith development does not stop at a personal level or relationship. All the issues of life centre around your faith commitment. However, in order to search out your faith's relationships to the issues of life in any meaningful way, a personal commitment to, and development of, one's faith is helpful. ECHS, along with other Christian schools out of the Reformed tradition, talk about their vision as being one that explores these relationships as well as one that emphasizes that personal commitments have to made.

The statements on the questionnaire dealt with the nurturing of one's faith, the ability to express one's faith openly, and with formal devotional activities. All the questions showed consistent results. The means ranged from 2.75 to 3.75 in all the statements. Of the five groups, the parents of present students and the graduates appeared the least satisfied. Students and parents of graduates were the most satisfied, and teachers were somewhere in the

middle. The greatest dissatisfaction was with the quality of the devotional times, as all five groups had their lowest mean in this statement.

The questionnaires did show that, on the whole, respondents were not overly satisfied with ECHS in this area. The significant numbers of dissatisfied people could be an indication that there is a desire for ECHS to be more directive and challenging with students when discussing their personal faith commitment. The indication is that effective formal devotional activities, activities that include small group devotions as well as all school assemblies, are desired. Presently there is dissatisfaction with the quality of these devotional activities. These formal devotional activities could be designed to encourage students to make personal commitments and to nurture and develop their faith. This type of encouragement can be of real benefit to each individual and to the whole supporting community.

A problem that has existed in the CRC is the way membership was seen. Membership in the Christian Reformed Church comes in two ways, baptism and profession of faith. Baptism takes place at infancy and a profession of faith usually takes place when one is somewhere between the ages of 15 - 20 but can take place at any time in one's life. To profess one's faith is an event in one's life that signifies a heart felt acceptance of Christ and his promises and a commitment to the doctrines and beliefs of the Christian Reformed Church. This profession, however, was seen by some as the next step in the process of being a member of the CRC. Young people were often encouraged by their parents to make a profession of faith but not challenged to make a personal commitment to Christ. To discuss one's faith was not common practice. It was assumed because of one's upbringing. This oddity is now being challenged in

the church and we have seen positive changes where the emphasis is shifting from merely going through the motions to actually feeling a commitment.

This same change in attitude within the church may also be sought after in the schools as well. Several comments made by parents in the West School study (1994) and in the Kaufman study (1991) referred to the possibility of having schools emphasize, with increased enthusiasm, a personal commitment to Christ which includes coming to a personal understanding of who God is. As well, parents and students were saying that an increased effort in providing adequate devotional experiences may provide students with the proper encouragement to grow in their faith. In this context then, I will consider student and parent comments about ECHS and its role in encouraging students to make personal commitments to Christ and in providing adequate devotional times.

It is important to note that this encouragement can come from several sources. The most likely is through the personal relationships that students have with teachers. It can also come in the courses, through formal devotional activities, and through the power of prayer. With this encouragement there is the hope that the Holy Spirit will move the hearts of these young people to make this personal commitment to Christ.

Teacher/Student Relations

Christian school vision statements often indicate that the relationship between students and teachers in the Christian school is expected to be somewhat special. The vision statement at ECHS says that each teacher is to see students as unique people, created in the image of God, with different gifts

and talents that need to be nurtured and developed. Teachers are to have time for students and are to evaluate them with complete fairness and integrity. Teachers are also to be good Christian role models for the students.

This topic produced results that showed a great deal of satisfaction with ECHS. All three questions showed respondents, with a very few exceptions, to be either highly satisfied or satisfied. In fact, this area was where respondents were the most highly satisfied. Students were especially satisfied with the amount of help that teachers were able to provide for them. Only one student expressed dissatisfaction and three were uncertain, whereas 27 were highly satisfied and 13 were satisfied. Students were also quite happy with the amount of positive attention teachers gave to their opinions where 18 students were highly satisfied and 20 were satisfied. Students also appreciated the way teachers treated them as individuals. Eleven students were highly satisfied and 27 were satisfied. Graduates concurred with the present students on all counts. They too expressed satisfaction with the help they received, the positive attention given to their opinions, and how they were being treated as individuals.

Parents of graduates, teachers, and the parents of the present students displayed almost the same levels of satisfaction. The teachers appeared satisfied with the way they treated students with regard to their individuality and the attention they gave to student opinions but they did express some dissatisfaction with the amount of time that they gave to help students. Two teachers said they were uncertain and three said they were dissatisfied with this time.

It appears that students are being treated with respect and get easy access to teachers when they need the help. The special relationship that should exist between teachers and students in any school, seems quite evident at ECHS. This ingredient seems to be very important in the success of the school. It is possible that certain built in advantages, for example its small size, allow ECHS to develop a culture where close teacher/student relationships are more easily developed. The school should never lose this part of its culture. These close relationships are very definitely a part of what makes the school a Christian school. To be interested in other people, to celebrate each others gifts, and to lift each other up in times of need, are vital to a Christian school's purpose.

Discipline

The intention of the questionnaire was to have respondents answer questions that would get at the details of the discipline policies at the school. Parents, students, and teachers were asked if they were satisfied with the way students were treated when they were disciplined for breaking certain rules of the school.

The responses to these statements only indicate whether or not parents, students, and teachers are satisfied with the discipline procedures. They do not indicate whether or not they feel the punishments should be stricter or more lenient. A discussion answering this question will arise in the dialogue that came as a result of the follow-up interviews and with some of the comments that were made on the questionnaires.

Describing the results on the issue of discipline is difficult. There is no clear statement from any of the groups as to how they feel. There are significant numbers of responses in each category. Students show the most dissatisfaction with how they are treated when they skip individual classes as six expressed uncertainty with their treatment, thirteen expressed dissatisfaction, and six were highly dissatisfied. Student responses to the other three questions were consistent with this question, except that fewer numbers were dissatisfied. It is clear that many students are dissatisfied with the rules and with the treatment they receive when they disobey these rules. Yet many students also expressed satisfaction with discipline. Graduates echoed the student results. It appears that each graduate and student, individually, has experienced discipline differently. There is no general statement that can be made to describe the experiences of these two groups.

The same can be said for the parents of the graduates and the parents of the present students. They too have responded with varying levels of satisfaction and their numbers are virtually the same as students and graduates. Generally they have expressed either satisfaction or uncertainty with rules and discipline. Overall, the parents of present students are less satisfied than the parents of graduates with the rules and discipline at ECHS. They have especially indicated a dissatisfaction with the way discipline is administered when students are rude to other teachers or fellow students.

Teachers appear to be the most satisfied group when it comes to discipline. They appear more satisfied than all the other groups in every area of discipline except in how students are treated when they are being rude to

teachers or fellow students. In this area they have expressed the same amount of dissatisfaction as the other four groups.

The area of discipline was mentioned several times in the West school study and in the Kaufman study as being another important ingredient in having a Christian direction in the school. It was clear that parents and students were concerned about the firmness and consistency with which discipline was administered in their schools. Students and parents expressed varying needs that can be referenced to one of the following topics: control, order, compassion, convenience, expediency, fairness, and the school's ability to treat individual cases separately. All of the topics can easily be related to how one feels about the Christian direction in the school. A strong sense of order, control, and firm discipline comes out of the need to provide for children an atmosphere in which few unchristian behaviours would be tolerated, to give all who attend the school a sense of disciplined Christian living. All children must live by the same rules with equal and consistent consequences for each aberration of the rule. The intention is that all students would be able to maintain this discipline through life to take up roles in society that would be a witness to their Christianity. This type of discipline is usually associated with isolationist education.

Providing discipline that seeks to treat each case individually comes out of the attitude that ones personal circumstances are to be included in any decision that involves disciplinary consequences. This form of discipline seeks to take on the burdens of individuals who may have behaviour disorders, attention deficit disorders, dysfunctional families etc., in an effort to keep them in

a caring Christian environment. These students may receive more lenient consequences for aberrations of the rules.

Discipline can be a very sensitive issue. Teachers often wonder where they should draw the line between giving students a gentle or firm nudge. The extreme side of the firm nudge would be expulsion. At what point are you sacrificing the whole for the benefit of the one.

The five groups that responded to the questionnaire indicated that they were not overly satisfied with discipline at ECHS. By simply looking at the numbers, however, there is no indication as to why there is this dissatisfaction. One must refer to the comments and the interviews to come to any conclusions as to what is wrong with discipline at ECHS. For this reason further discussion will be reserved for the next chapter.

Evaluation

If Christian schools are to be different then perhaps the way in which evaluation takes place should also be different. Evaluation should reflect the Christian direction for the school. The challenge for Christian teachers to apply Christian evaluation techniques has, however, been a personal one. As pointed out in the literature this is one area where little research has taken place. Christian teachers have been very much left alone in this area. Perhaps this is the case because there has been little pressure from parents or students to adopt new and distinctly Christian techniques.

Perhaps the best way to describe the responses to the statement of whether or not ECHS evaluations reflected a Christian direction would be to say that the respondents were uncertain. This statement generated one of the

highest number of people circling uncertain as an answer. Students listed uncertain seventeen times, graduates five times, parents of graduates nine times, parents four times, and teachers three times. The rest of the responses generally indicated satisfaction with the evaluation procedures at ECHS. Only four people in total were highly satisfied and only two were highly dissatisfied.

The uncertainty that was revealed by the respondents in the questionnaire does make one think that evaluation procedures at ECHS are consistent with what everyone else is doing. There is nothing that would cause anyone to be overly dissatisfied and nothing that would cause anyone to say something special is happening. Evaluation is one area that may need to be developed so that we will be able to say that something special is happening. More discussions with Christian teachers need to take place so that teachers don't just follow the norm for evaluation but come up with distinct Christian methods.

Student Relationships

In casual conversation about Christian schools, I have often heard the quote, "and that can happen in a Christian school?" The statement is almost always in reference to the way students behave, and especially in the way they treat each other. Again, it was clear from the West School Study and the Kaufman study that some parents and students were concerned about the behaviour of some of the students attending Christian schools. The question of whether or not students were expressing Christian behaviour in their relationships and in their lifestyle, is often of great concern for those sending their children to Christian schools. A common reason for attendance at

Christian schools is to be a part of a community that promotes and practices Christian behaviours or, at the very least, to avoid the influences of unchristian behaviour in the public school.

The statements on the questionnaire that dealt with this subject were concerned with the general behaviour of students and with students' expressions of Christian love in their relationships. The five groups generally expressed dissatisfaction with students' expressions of Christian love. Of the 44 students who responded, only fourteen said they were satisfied with the way students expressed Christian love and 25 were either dissatisfied or uncertain. The graduates had only two among them who were satisfied. The parents of present students had seven that were satisfied and nine that were dissatisfied. The teacher responses echoed the other groups as well. Four teachers were dissatisfied and two were highly dissatisfied.

When it came to describing student behaviour in general, all five groups had higher numbers of satisfied people. The mean in each group either stayed the same or went up when compared to the question on expressions of Christian love. Yet, large numbers were dissatisfied with student behaviour. It appears that the way some students act at ECHS is not the way they themselves or their parents would like to see it. These students behaviour seems poor, and their treatment of each other is less than Christian. Christian schools cannot escape what some might call typical adolescent behaviour. It seems that students desire to engage in non-Christian behaviour, on occasion, just to be like everyone else. This behaviour can be frustrating for parents, for the school, and in hindsight for the students themselves as they too have indicated remorse in engaging in this behaviour.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Extra-curricular activities provide opportunities for students to develop talents that are not otherwise provided for in the regular curriculum. As well, students are given opportunities to build community and to serve the school and others in very different ways. Developing individual talents, building community, and service, are all marks of the Christian vision for ECHS. Questions concerning the variety and quality of extra-curricular activities, especially in relation to their role in promoting a Christian lifestyle, were asked on the questionnaire.

Students seemed quite satisfied with the quality of the present extra-curricular activities but were less sure that the number of activities offered was sufficient. The other four groups were slightly less satisfied with the quality of present extra-curricular activities. Six parents of present students were satisfied and ten parents were uncertain. In these other four groups many concluded that the number of extra-curricular activities was unsatisfactory. Two teachers were dissatisfied with the number of activities. As well, eleven parents of present students, four parents of graduates, and nine graduates were either uncertain or dissatisfied with the number of activities that promoted Christian lifestyle.

The quality of the present extra-curricular activities does appear to be satisfactory to parents and students. ECHS has enjoyed much success with its sports program, sailing venture, and other miscellaneous events and respondents have indicated that these programs have worked well. There is, however, some concern over the number of activities that ECHS offers. Both parents and students have indicated that they are not satisfied with sports

activities dominating the extra-curricular scene. Sports has been a big part of ECHS and in spite of its small size they have been successful. Perhaps ECHS has placed too much emphasis on sports at the expense of activities that non-athletic students could participate in. As well, the success that is experienced in sports could get in the way of celebrating other gifts that students may have, gifts such as art, music, or acting.

Although most respondents were satisfied with the quality of the extra-curricular activities, parents of present students expressed some uncertainty that these activities did indeed promote Christian lifestyle. This uncertainty could be reflective of parents that do not have children that are involved in extra-curricular activities because none of the activities are of interest or their children have had bad experiences with their involvement.

Specific Course Contributions

The study done with ECHS in 1989 indicated that certain courses or teachers were better able or suited to articulate a Christian perspective. Several times it was suggested that it was the teacher that made it work and several times it was suggested that the course material lent itself to either an easy or more difficult articulation of a Christian perspective. The courses themselves, a place where teacher and student are intimately connected, are really the front lines. In the courses, teachers can and should be able to express a Christian vision within their discipline because they are the places where students and parents will best be able to articulate either satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

At ECHS the words, "to teach with a Christian perspective" are often used to describe what it means to teach as a Christian within your subject area. There is a Christian perspective of Math, of PE, of Social Studies. Teachers should be able to grasp what that perspective is within their subject areas and articulate this perspective to the students.

The questionnaire was designed to see if students and parents were satisfied with the Christian direction, or perspective, of the various courses taught at ECHS. All the courses were listed and respondents were asked if they were satisfied with these courses with respect to the evidence of Christian perspective.

It is difficult to report on the findings because such a report would reveal the identities of the teachers. It is possible to report in general terms. The teachers, should they desire the information, will be given an opportunity to see the results of the surveys with respect to the courses they teach.

The questionnaires indicated that Religious courses, Social Studies, English, and perhaps some aspects of the science courses provided a high degree of Christian direction. These subjects often deal with social issues that often necessitate making value judgments. In this way it is often easy to openly discuss Christian ways to deal with the issues. Courses such as Math or Industrial Arts do not have this built in advantage and therefore are often declared neutral. Statements such as "Math is Math" are often made to describe the difficulty Math teachers have when it comes to making students aware of a Christian perspective in Mathematics. The temptation is to sprinkle Bible verses onto the test papers or assignment sheets, or to pray before and after every class and call that perspective. Bible verses and prayer are of

course important in the Christian school but they do not in themselves constitute a Christian school. Math teachers explain, as one student put it on the questionnaire, "how numbers magically fit together", Physical Education teachers demonstrate that our bodies are temples of God and must be taken care of as a proper response to him, and Science teachers open God's creation to their students and explain what their roles are in this creation. It's not simply a matter of Bible classes or formal devotions.

It is very important for teachers to engage in constant conversation with each other to find ways to explain to students what it means to have a Christian perspective in the different disciplines. It is also important to remember that being a part of a Christian school involves all the other issues that we have already dealt with as well. The ways a school deals with student/teacher relations, discipline, extra-curricular activities, etc. are all important to what makes a school Christian.

Overall Expectations of Christian Education

One last statement from the questionnaire needs to be analyzed. The first statement on the questionnaire asked for a general impression of whether or not expectations of Christian Education are being met.

This statement indicated that respondents were generally satisfied with the Christian education delivered at ECHS. A high number of respondents were either satisfied or highly satisfied.

Summary

It appears that ECHS has a lot to build on as a high number of people are happy with the Christian direction at the school. The areas that seem to need the most work are student relationships and discipline. The area that was the most satisfactory was the area of teacher/student relationships. Extra-curricular activities, the feeling of being a part of a Christian community and ECHS' contribution to preparing students for life drew mixed reactions. One gets the feeling that ECHS has satisfied most people to a degree. Some aspects do, however, need to be worked on.

Chapter 5

Description and Discussion on Qualitative Data From the Questionnaires

Introduction

The five groups were each asked to respond to four open-ended questions. The questions dealt with courses, experiences at ECHS that made students think about living a Christian life, and about changes that were felt necessary to improve the Christian vision of the school. Two questions regarding courses were asked. The first asked respondents to identify areas of particular satisfaction with the Christian direction of courses and the second one asked about areas of dissatisfaction. Respondents were to be as specific as they could be, answering in one or two sentences.

All five groups made comments that related to one of the following items: a) being treated with respect, b) overall class and school atmosphere, c) the school's sense of community and its ability to develop that community, d) student relationships, e) student lifestyle, f) discipline, g) the schools desire or ability to encourage students to make a personal commitment to Jesus Christ, h) formal devotional activities, i) the teacher's approach to students and their courses, and general teacher attitude, j) the contributions of particular courses, and k) extra-curricular activities. In this chapter I will describe and discuss the findings in each area. As well I will synthesise this material with that of the quantitative data. It may be important to note that of the topics listed here one did not come up as a part of previous discussions. This was the topic of formal student evaluation.

As well, several of the comments were coded with respect to whether or not they revealed satisfaction with the transformational character of ECHS' mission statement. Comments were listed as either transformational, isolationist, or conformist. I will also discuss these comments with a view to identifying the predominant wishes of students and parents.

Being Treated with Respect

To be treated with respect was of utmost importance to present students. Students were particularly concerned with whether or not their opinions were being heard. Eight of the 44 students mentioned this as something they were satisfied with at ECHS. Seven students also mentioned that they like the opportunities they have to discuss their alternative ideas. On the negative side, one student made the comment that he or she did not feel respected enough for simply trying hard. In spite of poor grades this student felt that the effort should have been worthy of more praise.

The other four groups revealed fewer feelings about the sense of being treated with respect than the present students. One parent of a present student commented that his or her daughter was not being treated with respect or taken seriously. Two parents mentioned that students will respect teachers if they are being treated with respect. One teacher felt that there was a need to focus more on teaching the whole person. One graduate mentioned that he or she was satisfied with the amount of respect that was shown at the high school. One parent of a graduate mentioned that there was a lack of sensitivity to students. Teachers indicated that programs like "grade 12 majors" allows students to develop talents and confidence that are not a part of the regular curriculum.

It does appear that ECHS is satisfying parents and students in this area. Aside from the three really negative comments, students and parents generally feel that they are given the time necessary to develop their gifts and express their opinions. The comments and the quantitative data are consistent in that both reflect general satisfaction with the school.

Overall Class and School Atmosphere

The issue of whether or not the atmosphere at ECHS was distinctively Christian brought about many mixed reactions. On the one hand, several respondents indicated that the atmosphere was supportive, safe, uniquely Christian where love and respect for each other was the norm, and one in which teachers made an effort to promote Christian values. On the other hand many respondents also indicated that the atmosphere lacked tolerance, was too denominationally (CRC) focused, showed disrespect for scripture, had an academic focus that caused tension and separation between students who took courses in the 10, 20, 30 stream and students who took courses in the 13, 23, 33 stream, and displayed characteristics that made it difficult to distinguish it from a public school.

Of the five groups, the present students were the most positive about the school. Ten students wrote comments that expressed satisfaction with the atmosphere at ECHS. The comments were general, describing the atmosphere as healthy and a good reflection of the vision for the school. The negative comments from students expressed a desire for a more Christian atmosphere, one that was distinguishable from public schools. Graduates expressed the greatest dissatisfaction with the school. Ten comments were made that

indicated a desire for a more distinct Christian climate. The negative comments that graduates made concurred with those made by the students in that both wanted to see a greater distinction between public schools and ECHS.

Parents of graduates also made comments that showed some dissatisfaction with the atmosphere at ECHS. These respondents focused their dissatisfaction mainly on the school's lack of consensus on the type of atmosphere that should exist. Four parents of graduates referred to feelings they had that teachers were at odds with one another with regard to atmosphere, among other things, which caused a decline in respect for each other and students. One comment expressed a feeling of a lack of consistency and one parent mentioned that he or she had a feeling that there was a general lack of tolerance in the school.

Teachers and parents of present students wrote fewer comments about school atmosphere. Three parents felt that the atmosphere at ECHS was positive and one teacher felt that ECHS was able to develop a positive Christian atmosphere for its students.

The quantitative data that were related to this topic dealt mainly with the development of community. The two issues, however, are closely related. These data showed a general satisfaction with the atmosphere of the school especially on the part of present students. There is still this lingering doubt, however, among several of the respondents that ECHS is unique. Is there enough of a difference between ECHS and the public schools? Has ECHS been explicit enough in articulating what makes it different? Several graduates and present students have expressed this doubt. Moreover, to make things a bit more difficult there seems to be an impression among some of the parents that

the community supporting ECHS may have some difficulty coming up with a consensus on what the overall atmosphere at ECHS is to look like. One thing is certain. There is a real desire among all five groups for a distinctly Christian atmosphere. One student did mention that ECHS should not try to overemphasize the Christianity of everything, but the overwhelming majority wants to be different.

The School's Sense of Community and its Ability to Develop that Community

As mentioned earlier, it is difficult to separate a discussion on the development of community from that of school atmosphere. Many of the comments that were made concerning community were similar to those made about atmosphere. On the positive side, respondents indicated that there was a good sense of belonging and security, and that at ECHS there was a sense of family. The community was strong, comfortable, caring, supportive, and close. Three students also expressed their appreciation for the small size of ECHS. They indicated that the size of the school made them feel free to explore their boundaries in a comfortable atmosphere. On the negative side respondents indicated a need for more all school activities, more caring, and more open expression that would make everyone feel more like family.

Two students indicated that there was too much substance abuse going on, an abuse that they felt was being ignored in the school. One parent expressed a desire to have the community find ways to support one another as families. Perhaps the most common comment, however, especially on the part of the graduates, had to do with their feeling that the ECHS community was too closed. Nine graduates indicated that they found the community narrow,

isolated, and secluded from society. These comments were consistent with what was found in the quantitative data as graduates were the most dissatisfied with the development of community at ECHS.

Again it was the students who expressed the greatest satisfaction with the development of community at ECHS. Thirteen students made positive comments about ECHS' community. Perhaps the characteristic that described the students feelings the most was comfort. The size, the sense of belonging, and the expressions of concern and love that came from teachers were identified as important aspects of the community. The graduates expressed the greatest dissatisfaction with the community. The characteristic that best described their dissatisfaction was seclusion. Graduates found that the ECHS community was too comfortable. They felt unprepared to take on the world. Some of the comments that expressed these feelings were: "I never saw gangs and I had a problem with drugs when I left ECHS." "ECHS should prepare you more with regard to being able to stand up to the problems of this world," and "I found myself completely unprepared for the sudden immersion into the mosaic of people and opinions."

The differing opinions between graduates and students, that are being expressed here, should be the basis for much discussion. Earlier we saw that parents, along with the students, were satisfied with the way in which the community was being developed at ECHS. It was speculated that parents were generally happy with this closed community as it was consistent with the way in which they lived. Here we see that students also feel comfortable with ECHS' community. To reconcile the differences between graduates and parents and

students would be an important step in getting a greater degree of overall satisfaction within the community.

Student Relationships

Another issue that has much to do with atmosphere and community is the topic of student relationships. Satisfaction with community or atmosphere often has much to do with the way students get along. The quantitative data showed that all groups were clearly dissatisfied with the way students got along. The comments made regarding this subject expressed some of the reasons for this dissatisfaction but several comments were also made that seem to indicate satisfaction with the way students interact with each other.

Dissatisfaction with student relationships had everything to do with how students often treated one another. Two students mentioned that a better attitude was necessary especially when dealing with other people. Two students also mentioned that they felt gossip was a real problem. One parent of a graduate felt that his or her child lacked friendships. Another parent of a graduate and a parent of a present student mentioned that they would have liked to have seen fewer cliques.

The respondents who expressed satisfaction in this area said that some students were encouraging, that there was a genuine interest in each other, and that the students had very close ties with each other. Present students were especially positive as eight students declared that they felt that there was a close bond within the student body. Comments like "you know everybody and most everyone is your friend," and "the close relationships at this school is really remarkable," expresses real satisfaction with student relationships. Five

comments made by parents of present students also expressed a feeling of satisfaction with the way the student body was getting along. One graduate mentioned that his or her friendships remained quite strong after school was over.

It is clear that some students were able to develop very strong friendships and other students have been hurt by fellow students. The overwhelming dissatisfaction with student relationships in the quantitative data indicates that more could have been said by parents or students. This area may be highly sensitive and it is difficult to comment on. If specific examples were given the identities of some may have been revealed causing one to feel like they were squealing. ECHS has a lot to build on. Several positive comments were made in this area. However, it may be an issue that should be discussed with students to determine if anything can be done in this area.

Student lifestyle

Another area that is closely related to that of community, atmosphere, and student relationships is student lifestyle. The question to be answered here is whether or not parents or students were satisfied with student behaviour with respect to the way their lives reflected godly living and whether or not ECHS did enough to promote this lifestyle. The question of lifestyle is not only one of whether or not students take drugs, drink alcohol excessively or engage in wild parties. The question has everything to do with the ability to stand up for Christ and be able to express faith in him.

Students and graduates had the most to say about lifestyle and much of it was negative. Eight comments were made that expressed displeasure with the

lifestyle of their fellow students. Twelve comments were made that urged ECHS to place more emphasis on making students aware of what it means to live a Christian lifestyle. Typical of such comments were, "everyone at ECHS has to be aware that they are witnesses to Christ, something that I was never taught at ECHS," "more emphasis on Christian lifestyle is needed but don't be preachy," and "to live as a Christian wasn't clearly demonstrated." Student comments were similar. One student assumed that the only way Christian lifestyle was being taught was through the "stingy rules." He or she stated that if that was what Christian lifestyle was all about than they wanted no part of it.

Some students did however express satisfaction with how Christian lifestyle was being taught. Three students pointed out that CALM and religious classes did discuss Biblical norms for moral living as well as the need for a Christian lifestyle. Six graduates also commented that they discussed issues of lifestyle in CALM and religious classes. These graduates indicated that they were made aware of the Christian's purpose in this world and one graduate said that he or she was taught not to be ashamed of the gospel.

The other three groups made similar comments. One teacher made the comment that students should be allowed greater responsibility for walking the Christian life. Three parents of graduates expressed some concern over the negative, anti-Christian attitude displayed by some students. However three of these parents also mentioned that their children were taught biblical norms for Christian living. Parents of present students had very little to say about student lifestyle. One parent made the comment that students were being taught how to live as Christians and another parent said that students were forced to look inside themselves and challenged to respond as Christians.

Although there are a few positive comments there is an overwhelming number of negative comments. The negative comments made by the graduates are consistent with the theme that these graduates seemed to embrace, that of being unprepared for the world. They expressed a lack of awareness of how to live as a Christian and how to defend their faith in the midst of so much opposition. This expression is disturbing as it is incongruent with the transforming vision of the school.

The negative comments made by parents were not so much an expression of making their children aware of what Christian lifestyle was but came more out of a desire to see their children live a disciplined moral life. Two parents expressed a desire for stricter discipline procedures to force this disciplined lifestyle. For students it was a matter of education, of teaching what is Christian lifestyle, and of how one can live this life. For parents it was more a matter of enforcing this lifestyle. This expression is consistent with the theme that some parents have embraced, that of isolating their children from anything that is "of the world."

Discipline

If the comments that the five groups made are any indication, discipline is a non-issue. The five groups combined made only 14 comments with regard to discipline and of the 14 comments nine were made by the present students. Of the nine comments made four indicated a desire for increased discipline and five indicated a desire for a decrease in discipline. These five students were especially concerned about the rules concerning lates and absences. The students who indicated a desire for increased discipline were especially

concerned that students should be deterred from taking drugs and smoking by the use of heavier punishments.

From the attention given to discipline in the comments on the questionnaire it can perhaps be concluded that there is general satisfaction with discipline at ECHS. It may also be that the type of discipline practised reflects what the respondents feel is Christian discipline. The vision of the school states that students are individuals and discipline should be practised in a way that reflects that vision. Students should be treated on an individual basis. Sweeping rules should not be the norm. Perhaps ECHS has been successful in this practice.

The quantitative data did, however, reveal some dissatisfaction with the system of detentions and suspensions for lates and absences. Perhaps the way in which small misdemeanours are handled at ECHS are not handled to the satisfaction of the respondents. The dissatisfaction with the detention and suspension system for these misdemeanours should be of some concern, however, and may need to be changed.

The School's Desire or Ability to Encourage Students to Make a Personal Commitment to Jesus Christ

The quantitative data indicated an overall desire for an increased effort in encouraging students to make a decision for Christ. The comments made by parents and students also indicated that same desire. Two comments were made by parents of graduates that encouraged the school to help students come to a place of decision. Another parent indicated dissatisfaction in that the school simply assumed that the students had a personal relationship with Jesus

Christ. Parents of present students also expressed some desire for the school to encourage students to share their faith openly. One parent asked for compulsory weekly chapels. Graduates were the most concerned of the five groups making nine comments in this regard. Some of the comments that expressed this concern were, "ECHS needs to emphasize that it's wonderful to be a Christian," "the development of the Christian faith must be of paramount importance," and "spiritual development is not only the job of the church and the family but also the job of the school."

Although the comments given by the respondents were quite passionate the interesting thing was the lack of comments made in this area. It seemed that it was an issue of relative significance only to the graduates. The lack of comments may be an indication that the movements in the CRC churches that reflect a stronger commitment to challenge students to make a personal commitment to Christ is remaining in the churches. Perhaps the respondents feel that this challenge is better suited for the churches. One parent indicated that, "CRC kids can get overdosed by Catechism, church, and school and react against some aspects of religion."

Formal devotional activities

The groups that had the most to say about devotional activities were the students, graduates, and teachers, every group except parents. The two parent groups made only three comments in total. One parent indicated a need for weekly chapels, another expressed a desire for motivational speakers to challenge students to make following Christ a priority, and one said that devotional activities at ECHS were helpful in making his or her child think about

living a Christian life. The fact that it seemed to be a non issue for parents again makes me think that they are quite comfortable with what is presently taking place. The number of times and the types of activities that are a part of the school's formal devotional activities may be in line with how many of the parents participate in devotions. Students, on the other hand, have expressed a desire for more opportunities for devotions. The students made 27 comments that expressed an appreciation of, and a desire for more, devotional activities.

The types of devotional activities that seem to be desired by students are all school motivational assemblies. These assemblies would have motivational speakers and worship bands. Some students seem to really interested in singing. Seventeen of the 27 comments expressed a desire for more singing. Graduates didn't express the same need for devotional assemblies and music but they did say that they were dissatisfied with the conventional scripture passage and prayer. Eight comments were made to that affect. It appears that the students need something different from what they are getting. Traditional CRC devotional activities, to read a passage from scripture followed by a prayer doesn't seem to meet the needs of the students. Students feel the need to be encouraged and motivated in group activities that involve music and upbeat speakers.

Although the teachers said very little about devotions they did express a need for more opportunities to get together to pray and to grow spirituality as a community and as teachers. Ten comments were made about the value and power of prayer. There was, however, one concern that time may be a factor in this development. The desire expressed by the teachers, along with the needs

stipulated by the students, may be the beginning of a new style of formal devotional activities at ECHS.

The Teacher's Approach to Students and their Courses, and General Teacher Attitude

This category brought about passionate responses from all five groups. Of course this is not all that surprising in that experiences that students have with individual teachers make up much of what a student goes through in a day. It's the essence of their schooling. Often the thing that we remember most about our schooling is the relationships and influences of certain teachers. Comments made by all five groups clearly verbalized this essence.

All five groups had both positive and negative experiences with teachers. On the positive side it was said that some teachers were able to relate their Christian convictions and express their joy in Christ. Some teachers were said to be positive role models for students, caring, sensitive, deeply committed to Christ and to students, encouraging, and able to motivate students to positive action. On the negative side it was said that some teachers had little or no Christian focus, lacked integrity, had poor attitudes towards students, were male chauvinists, treated students in the 10, 20, 30 courses differently than those in the 13, 23, 33 courses, and were poor role models. Of significant importance was the relationship that students had with certain teachers. Seven comments were made that indicated that students had experienced personality conflicts with teachers.

Along with these comments, several neutral comments were also made that stated the importance of teaching, the attitude of teachers, and the

importance of a deep rooted conviction to the Lord. Seventeen times comments were made that expressed this importance. These comments, along with quantitative data that affirmed the teachers' ability to meet student needs, suggests that ECHS has been able to satisfy most parents and students in this area. This is significant in that this is an area of expressed priority for parents and students. Besides the 17 comments that were made expressing this priority, six comments were also made calling for very careful selection of teachers. These comments may be influenced by a desire to avoid teachers who are spoken about negatively.

The Contributions of Particular Courses to the Christian Direction in the School

Again it is difficult to comment on individual course contributions without revealing the identity of teachers. The comments did confirm what was alluded to in the quantitative data. The Religious courses, English, Social Studies, and some Science courses were identified as the courses that contributed the most to the Christian direction of the school.

Extra-curricular activities

The quantitative data showed that parents and students were not particularly satisfied with the number of extra-curricular activities that provided Christian direction. There was general satisfaction with the quality of the present extra-curricular activities. One got the impression that the extra-curricular program was not diversified enough.

Students were especially satisfied with the quality of the present programs. Thirteen comments were made that expressed positive feelings

towards the present sports program. It appears the relationships that were developed, the devotional times experienced on the teams, and the teamwork, impressed several students. Graduates mentioned the positive experiences they had with the annual school play and one parent mentioned the positive impact that the sports team had on his or her son or daughter.

On the negative side, four comments were made that implied an overemphasis on the sports program. One student commented that if you weren't a basketball player than you weren't much. The concern with the overemphasis on sports is combined with a feeling that music is being neglected. Ten comments were made that indicated a desire for extra-curricular music activities. Some of these comments were made in the context of discussing formal devotional activities but all were quite concerned that some sort of music program was necessary. The diversification that some seem to be looking for would be in the area of music.

Transformational, Isolationist, or Conformist Education

Comments that were identified as transformational were ones that dealt with the integration of faith and learning and with the conviction that our faith could transform this world. Examples of such comments are, "we are always asked how a Christian should respond to history," "we talk about whether or not things are justified or not," or "the teachers would talk about certain issues and then take it further to see if Christians should support or help to change these issues."

Comments that were put into the conformist category were ones where parents and students saw the Christian direction as sprinkled on the curriculum.

It wasn't seen as integrated into the curriculum. If parents and students spoke of this sprinkling in positive terms it could perhaps be assumed that these respondents were in favour of this type of curriculum. It would be as if one merely wanted to take up a place in society and conform to it. A person's faith would have little to do with how one does business, votes, or chooses what to become involved in. Examples of such comments are, "the teacher teaches the course and adds how it's related to Christianity," or "the course really doesn't have any Christian focus." The first comment expresses a sprinkling of Christianity on the curriculum and the second tries to make a case for the neutrality of a subject. Inherent in this comment is the idea that some areas in life may be neutral, an idea that is flatly rejected in the ECHS vision statement.

Comments that were placed in the isolationist category expressed a strong desire to shelter students from worldly things. As well, comments that saw the significance of Christian education as an education that was to merely move students to greater spiritual awareness, were placed in this category. Examples of such comments were, "the development of personal Christian faith must be of paramount importance," or "we need strict and enforced rules to promote positive Christian lifestyle and alleviate non Christian behaviour."

An overwhelming number of comments were made in the area of transformational education. Graduates, parents, and students were very much in favour of transformational education. All groups made several positive or negative comments with regards to the way ECHS was able to provide transformational education. The students and graduates made the most comments that could be categorized as transformational. Students made 33 comments that in some way indicated satisfaction with the way faith was being

integrated with learning and 41 comments that indicated dissatisfaction. Graduates made 36 comments altogether, 12 that indicated satisfaction, eight that were neutral in that they merely expressed the importance of transformational education, and 16 that expressed dissatisfaction with ECHS in this area.

The large number of negative comments does indicate that not all is well. There may be two explanations for this. It could be that some teachers have not been able to integrate faith and learning into the curriculum or they have not been able to clearly identify what it is about their course that makes it unique, different from the same course taught in the public school. My guess is that it may be a combination of both. From our discussion on specific course contributions we saw a number of courses identified as having made a significant contribution to the Christian direction of the school. It may be safe to assume that the positive comments in this area came as a result of these courses. The negative comments may have come as a result of some of the other courses. To avoid continued negative comments about some courses some changes may need to be made. These changes could be influenced by conversations with students, parents, and teachers, especially those teachers that have had some success in this area.

Although fewer comments were made that could be placed in the categories of either isolation or conformation they still may be of some significance. The comments put into these categories were, relatively speaking, made by parents. Parents have expressed a greater desire to protect their children or to have their children be able to make their own way in society. Transforming society is less of a priority with parents.

Chapter 6

Description and Discussion of the Results of the Interviews

Introduction

As was the goal with chapters four and five, this chapter again seeks to describe and discuss information given by people connected to ECHS. The information in this chapter comes from eleven interviews. The information indicates levels of satisfaction with the Christian direction at ECHS. Of the eleven interviews, four were conducted with parents and seven with students. The seven students were interviewed at the school and the parents were interviewed at their homes.

The interviews are really an intimate expression of a lived experience at ECHS. The overall tone was one that expressed an overwhelming love for ECHS but also a genuine concern for the direction in which the school was headed. The interviews revealed areas where theory and practice were closely related and conveyed areas where holes existed in the relationship. This chapter will describe and discuss the information by portraying the lived experiences of the respondents in an attempt to confirm or to find weaknesses in the information gathered on the questionnaires. Finally, information from chapters four and five is synthesized with the interview data.

Parent Interviews

Portrait #1:

Dan and Carol have a child at ECHS. They have had children in Christian schools for many years. They don't feel that Christian education is for everybody but they have, so far, sent four of their children to Christian schools

and intend to continue to do so. They did say that:

> All the people just expect that you're supposed to go to the Christian High, but we don't feel that way. We feel we have to look at what's the best for our child. If my child is not academically inclined, than he may be better off in a technical school? Then we should go do that.
>
> I realize that we cannot be all things to everybody as a small school. You know, you either go this way or you go that way.
>
> You can't expect people, then, to just send their child to the Christian school because it is a Christian school.

Dan and Carol's first impressions of the high school were not the greatest. They did not feel welcome. They felt that the first impressions the school gives to prospective parents and students should be more positive. As well, when they visited the school they didn't feel like the teachers had very much time for them. They did not experience a feeling of community.

> When you go into the elementary school... they say hello! How are you?' That's what the teachers do. You walk into the high school, and they look at you as if to say 'who do we have here, what are you doing here?' Very rarely is there a 'hi!' I mean, that's just a little thing, just 'hi' ...

They also mentioned that they have been reluctant to get involved in the school because they felt their involvement would not be accepted. They have had experiences where they have made suggestions but felt the suggestions had fallen on deaf ears.

When Dan and Carol were asked what things made them aware of the fact that their child was attending a Christian school they said:

> It's kind of hard to say in a way. I think those CALM courses. The discussions that they have in the class.

> From what I hear from our child these things really helped to define for themselves what it means to be a Christian in today's society. I also think that, for our child, it is the singing. She wishes it was stronger. The prayer group was also important to her.

Dan and Carol expressed a feeling that often came up in the questionnaires as well. What was important to the Christian direction of the school, in their view, were courses that challenged them to discover what was important to be a Christian in today's society and formal devotional activities. They continued to say that they were disappointed that ECHS did not do more to encourage these devotional activities. One way they felt that this could be accomplished would be to start a choir. They also felt that since ECHS was closely connected to the CRC church, the ability students have to express personal feelings about faith related issues was limited. They said that "it's kind of a CRC thing to not talk about your feelings."

In this context Dan and Carol very quickly added that they felt the school emphasized academics and athletics. They felt that if you were not athletic or didn't have academic gifts than there wasn't much for you at ECHS.

> Comments from her, and I have seen it and I've heard it from other people, were that the Christian high school is for athletic and academic people. If you don't have your academics and you don't have your athletics, there's not a heck of a lot there for you. Our child asked why the extra money went into soccer, why couldn't this money have gone into choir or something? Why is everything focused that way? A choir can also be a great witness. A choir, that's the type of thing that she would like to see and I can see that too.

Teacher/student relations were also a concern for Dan and Carol. They felt that on too many occasions students were simply left alone to do their work and fend for themselves. Their comments in this regard are somewhat shocking. The questionnaires seem to show that this was an area where ECHS excelled. Dan and Carol did qualify this somewhat by saying that this wasn't a problem with every teacher but that the school had better be aware of the trend. Dan was especially concerned about this as he felt it was important for students to achieve the grades to be eligible to enter university. If teachers didn't do their job well, students would suffer with low marks. Low marks, in Dan's opinion, would mean poor jobs.

Dan and Carol also commented on student relationships. They felt that in a small school it is harder to fit in.

> It's such a small school so it's harder to fit in. A bigger school is easier to fit in because there's more kids that might be like you whereas at the Christian high, some grades are very good, I mean you're going to get that any time, but because it's smaller and if you're just a little different, it's hard to fit in.

This comment does support some of the comments from the questionnaire that showed that the students at ECHS can be mean to each other. It's a sad reality and may be something that needs to be discussed with the students. Perhaps the school could also do a better job of modelling this type of love for each other. Dan and Carol made the comment that athletes and those that were academically inclined got all of the accolades. They noted: "These awards that were just given out. They were basically given to the academic kids and the athletes. You know? These guys getting five, six awards." If this is the impression that parents and students have, than expressions of Christian love

and acceptance for those that are not academically inclined or athletes are not modelled very well.

When asked if they were satisfied with the way discipline was approached at ECHS several remarks were made. Overall they were quite satisfied. The central issue for Dan and Carol was that, in their opinion, there were inconsistencies. They felt that detentions were given to students for coming to class late but that nothing was done with students that had come to dances under the influence of alcohol, a more serious offence. Dan and Carol both felt that rules were important to maintain order but they also felt that you had to trust students and give them a sense of responsibility.

> I think students that age should be given the respect and the responsibility, and I think they'll take it. Overall, no complaints. I wouldn't want to see it any stricter. I think with kids that age, you're looking at young adults and I'm sure a lot of them would know what's going on and can take the responsibility as long as you give it to them. I think, well, there is always the exception.

Dan and Carol felt that if there was a problem at the school it should be brought out in the open so that the gossip could be avoided. For Dan and Carol it was important to be able to bring the problems out into the community so that the whole community could support the people or person struggling.

The last comment from Dan and Carol was meant as a caution. They referred specifically to the relationship between theory and practice. They felt that there were inconsistencies or holes in the relationship.

> They say well there's a focus on having only a Christian perspective exposed and that's why there's major stuff going on. But yet, it says one thing, and yet on the other hand, we find there's a lot of value put on prestige and to excel in things like sports for instance. And I find that contradictory.

Dan and Carol's comments expressed a great deal of dissatisfaction with the school. Yet, the impression I was left with was that not all was lost. For now, they would continue to support the school in the hopes that some changes would be made.

Portrait #2

Barb is also a parent of a student at ECHS. She too is a long time supporter of Christian education in Edmonton. For her the purpose of Christian education is to

> help those kids in terms of responding to God and responding to God through the knowledge of the world. I guess that's how I would put it very simply. Because the task is basically an academic one but it's an act, it's how we learn and respond to God. That's still always central. That should always be central. And I think that's easy to say and much more difficult to do.

In Barb's opinion, ECHS has been able to establish a positive community feeling. This feeling, in Barb's view, translates into an ability to take on the important task of Christian schooling. She says:

> I think the people there are really trying hard to develop community. I've sensed that right from the start with my child, in terms of the way the kids related to each other and the ways the teachers interacted with the kids. There was a real focus on developing community. The kids really got together quickly and there was lot of that kind of bonding. There were also some new students in that class and I think they were really assimilated well and accepted as part of the group. That I saw as a positive.

Other positive experiences for Barb and her child were the grade 11 service project, some to the fine arts programs, and the English and Social

Studies courses. The grade 11 service project was a true reflection of what a Christian school should promote, working as community for community. As a matter of fact Barb felt that a service component should be built right into the curriculum.

> I think to have a service component built in to one of the subjects would be an excellent idea because the kids would actually come to grips with the fact that this is a part of who you are. I mean, if you start getting your hands dirty you get involved in what it means.

The English and Social Studies classes have been challenging Barb's child to deal with issues that are, in Barb's view, important for Christians to deal with.

She says:

> The fact that a lot of the focus in English was writing essays and to do that you deal with issues, then take a stand. I think that was an important part for my child. It was the same sort of thing in social studies. You know, you're dealing with the world around you and issues that we face as Christians and that was really good.

When asked about negative experiences at ECHS Barb was quick to reply:

> I think one thing is the over-emphasis on sports. You know it just came up at the awards things last week. You know who gets the awards, the kids who are involved in sports. And sure, a lot of the times those are kids who do well academically or who are involved otherwise, but it just seems to center on the athletic program. And of course, if you have kids that are into other kinds of things, whether it be music or whatever, there's a lot of gaps in the program at the high school.

The gaps that Barb was referring to were a lack of an emphasis on music and art. To Barb, student accomplishments in the arts and music were equal to winning a provincial title. "Those kinds of accomplishments are equal to winning a provincial. They really are, but they don't become acknowledged in the same way."

Barb did feel that her child was being valued as an individual but she also mentioned individual teachers could play an important role in how relationships between students and teachers develop. She related a personal experience with a teacher where she felt the teacher was not talking about her child at all.

> I remember one interview where I really had a sense that this teacher didn't even know who my child was. I thought, my child has been in this teacher's class since September and I didn't have a sense that the teacher knew who my child was.

It appears that although teachers at ECHS are able to establish good relationships with students there have been negative experiences here and there. Dan and Carol have talked of negative experiences in this area and the questionnaires indicated that six students were highly dissatisfied with the way they were treated by teachers. As indicated in chapter four, teacher/student relations are a real strength of ECHS but these interviews indicate that it is something that should not be taken for granted. Establishing positive student/teacher relations is difficult and should be worked on consistently.

Devotional activities were also discussed. Barb felt that more responsibility should be placed on the students. In her opinion students should be more involved in homeroom devotions and in developing assemblies. She

felt devotions should be upbuilding and encouraging, so students get the idea that God is with them every step of the way. When asked if devotions should be designed to challenge kids to make personal commitments to Jesus Christ she replied, "that's not the role of the school."

When asked about discipline at ECHS Barb said that discipline at ECHS has been good. She couldn't respond from personal experience because her child hasn't been too effected by any of the rules.

Barb speaks of the school in positive ways. She is especially happy with the feeling of community that is experienced at ECHS. The emphasis that she places on service components in the curriculum and in integrating faith and learning by dealing with important issues is an indication that Christian education should be involved in transforming activities. ECHS has been successful, in her opinion, in providing these opportunities but she wouldn't mind seeing more service oriented activities.

Portrait #3

Evelyn also has a child at ECHS. She feels that the things that make ECHS a Christian school are:

> the 'helping' projects such as when they go to Rehoboth and to the Youth Emergency Shelter. Those are good things to do. I think the camaraderie on the biology field trip is good and the praying together, singing together...that was good. I feel the teachers are good Christian models.

In spite of these positive remarks Evelyn did not feel that ECHS was a positive experience for her child. She felt that there was a spirit missing at ECHS. The

lack of spirit was very evident in her own child. When asked what she felt caused that lack of spirit she made a number of comments:

> lack of parental involvement, just asking parents for help, is kind of unheard of. I know parents who, I think, would like to help.
>
> I would really like to see a Peer Support Group in the high school. It can make such a difference. Especially for some of the new kids.
>
> I know the kids are smoking on the other side of the school ground, and I know that those are "those" kids. I know that's how they think. But I think there's a way to get them back in; by choosing them for certain things, "gee student, you're really gifted at this ... do you think maybe you could help us out in this?" Bob, "you're really good with your woodworking, do you think maybe you could help us out?" Get them out of that, not that they're going to quit smoking, but at least they'll feel like they're a part. But now I think they feel like 'those are the smart ones in there and we're the dumb ones over here smoking on the other side of the road'. I'm not saying it's right either, but I can see how even the other kids, "oh yeah, those are the ones that smoke and they're the ones that have a beer on the weekend." And I still really think that you can change that. I really believe that. It's by encouragement and making them feel like they're a part of the school.
>
> There is too much labelling. If you're not academic, you just don't count for a heck of a lot. The non-academics, they should feel like they're important, and they don't.
>
> The office door stays open for parents to come in and have a coffee and a look around. They should be able to go bug their kids in the class. That kind of stuff, I think should be encouraged because if they're not made to feel welcome then they won't feel very comfortable.

Evelyn is making several appeals. She would like to see the school as more of a welcoming place. She would also like to see a better attitude towards

students that are less academically inclined and she would like to see a peer support group started. The comments regarding a welcoming school are not new nor are the comments about the way non-academic students are being treated as opposed to the academic students. Evelyn feels that the school is far too concerned with producing graduates who will qualify for university. Evelyn's child had to put up with some criticism when this child told others in school that university was not in the plans. The impression was that this decision was almost unacceptable. It really does appear that ECHS may have to work on these problems.

As was the case with Dan, Carol and Barb, Evelyn also related negative experiences when asked whether or not her child was respected as a student. Evelyn replied:

> No. I think they're 'putting up' with my child. That's the sense that I get. My child is not academic at all and I am not making excuses for my child's behaviour or that my child likes school, I know my child doesn't like school, but I was really disappointed that my child could not have gotten involved more. It was like my child was being neglected even though the talent was there.

The question of discipline was also brought up and again Evelyn mentioned several things that she felt should change to make the way things are done more distinctly Christian. She said:

> I think they have to know, as far as I'm concerned, that discipline is the parent's job first. I believe a school has to have rules, but ... I would hate our school to be so regimented that there would be no forgiving. Let's say if they found out there was a homosexual in grade eleven that he could be dealt with in compassion and that he could be helped, and not condemned.

When asked about how the school handles the little things she said:

> I think it's ridiculous. I think it's ridiculous, far too much time is spent on chasing kids and phoning me. I think kids have to be accountable sometimes and I know it can be very disruptive in the classroom, but there's got to be a solution.

It is very important for Evelyn to have students treated as individuals, a message that is conveyed in the mission statement of the school. It appears, at least to Evelyn, that the message is not getting through. She said, "everybody is so different. Everybody should be tolerated as a person, created in the image of God. I would hate to see it any different."

When asked if she had any advice for the school she replied:

> I would say let us parents help. Let us get involved. Ask for help. Be tolerant of each individual. I really think that. Treat even the kids who aren't academically inclined, treat them the same as all the other ones.

These comments seem to sum up Evelyn's wishes for the school. She describes a need for a better sense of community where all are treated equal. For Evelyn this community must draw in the parents as much as possible. She really feels that she should be an integral part of what's going on. Her wishes are consistent with what the school says it is doing in its mission statement. In Evelyn's opinion there are holes in the relationship between theory and practice.

Portrait #4

Joanne is another long time supporter of Christian education in the city of Edmonton. Presently she has a child at ECHS. Although Joanne was able to

point out a few positives things, her feelings about ECHS have been negative. Her feelings of urgency and love for Christian education have given her incentive to reluctantly support the school through the many years of its existence.

Her dissatisfaction with the school stems mainly from her feelings that the school does not see itself first of all as a Christian school.

> I guess I feel that through what my kids say and what I hear, I think the Christian school doesn't sell itself primarily as being Christian. I think it's sports. And to me, sports should be an outcome of the fellowshipping of the community, of all the other things we do as a school community.

Joanne sees the school as a community, a community that must take even its weakest members with it and ensure that person a solid Christian education. No one was to fall through the cracks. Joanne related a personal experience of a student that she said fell through the cracks. In her opinion, this should never happen. She felt that a school the size of ECHS should have no trouble making sure every students' needs were well taken care of. That the school would go out of its way to ensure that this happened.

Joanne also sees Christian education as education that promotes and encourages students to serve. When asked how she would define a Christian school she replied:

> I think service should be an expectation of a Christian High School. We should be different, we should be very different from what other schools do. We shouldn't be a clone of other schools and somehow we have to say, 'what would define the Christian High.' To me, the first word, Christian. Let's first define how we live that?
>
> They're older, they can do lots more than they can when they're in junior high. They should be at Els Memorial, they

> should be at that Old Age Centre, they should be in the other Christian day school, volunteering to help out. They should present themselves first and foremost having a Reformed perspective and this is how we see the world, this is how we act and play and work in the world. We're beginning to do that but I don't think it's demanded of them.

Joanne was very concerned about the school being different. She made a reference to the school dances where she indicated that she felt very uncomfortable with them.

> One thing, I think that should be dropped are the dances. I really don't think it has anything that a Christian school is about. If they want to go to a dance like that, go to the public school because it's identical. Unless you can show me a dance that's different than the ones I went to, like have a bunny hop with lights on and tables, where kids can actually talk to teachers, to each other, then O.K. But you put me in a gym that's pitch black, kids hanging all over each other, the music not really looked at in terms of whether or not its good and proper, then I say no.

Joanne would also like to see more discussion, as a school, on the questions of lifestyle. She is concerned about the parties that the kids often have and she feels there should be more open discussion about these and other things, e.g. drug use and smoking. She feels that the school may be trying to avoid these issues. Joanne would like to see the school be very open about its Christianity in all areas but especially in relation to lifestyle issues.

> When we ask our children, 'What made that a Christian school?' we want them to say 'because they never pretended they weren't and they were very open in all their classes that we are a Christian school and entertained all kinds of questions and weren't afraid to take a stand and mention it and talk about it and to challenge the kids with it'.

Joanne felt that this was not the case at ECHS. Except for a few of the religious classes she felt the school did not openly confess its Christianity.

> We have to be Christian. And if we're not, then we better label ourselves something different.

Joanne also felt that the discipline procedures were very confusing and cumbersome. She felt that the students saw the discipline procedures as a game and had very little respect for it. She also mentioned that on occasion parents, at social gatherings, would laugh about the policy.

To improve ECHS, Joanne felt that besides identifying first of all with being a Christian school, ECHS should really make each student feel important. Students should feel like they have a place in the school and that they are valued as individuals. Teachers should have a genuine interest in each student and in each students' talents and activities. She felt that this wasn't the case. "I often hear that the teachers say they're always available. You don't hear that from the students that much."

Joanne also feels that the school needs to be fired up. She feels it needs a reawakening so that students will feel excited and blessed because they attend ECHS. To accomplish this, Joanne thinks, is going to take long hard hours on the part of teachers and the community but she feels if they work together it can be accomplished. The school, for her, has to be different. "If it isn't different than I have to question, "why are we here?"

Student Interviews

Portrait #1

Aaron didn't have much to say about ECHS. Aaron was quite satisfied with ECHS. He felt that the teachers were respected and that most students were there to learn. He said, "There's quite a bit of respect but some students like to keep the atmosphere a bit fun, so then they don't feel quite as bored during class." Aaron also felt that the extra-curricular activities that were provided were good but he felt that the newly created soccer team did get out of hand. "Well, during our soccer games, guys would go out of their way to, say, hit a guy down and would not really be acting Christian." Aaron was appreciative of teachers when they disciplined students for making fun of other students. He was also quite satisfied with the way his courses were going. When asked if he felt the courses were teaching him things about living the Christian life he replied:

> Well, most of the courses. I'm taking math, chemistry, and physics, that kind of stuff. In these courses and in social, we try to look at stuff from a Christian perspective and that's a good thing.

Of real concern for Aaron was the amount of peer pressure that existed at ECHS. To him there was a lot of pressure to smoke and do other things that were not necessarily, in his opinion, Christian. He noted that he felt these were some of the things that made him think that ECHS wasn't very Christian. He said:

> It doesn't seem like it's a Christian school. There's probably more smoking and that kind of stuff here than there is at other schools. There is more pressure from other students.

Aaron appears satisfied with the Christian education he is receiving at ECHS. He is able to recognize the Christian perspective in the courses and he finds most extra-curricular activities to be adequate. He does have a problem with the amount of peer pressure. This may be an indication that the relationship that exists between some students is not based on love but on a desire to show the other person up.

Portrait #2

Erika indicated that she has attended private schools all of her life and she is glad that she did.

> I like going here. I like it better probably because I've gone to a private school all my life. It is so close and so small that it's really personal and I like that. I think it's a great school.

The things that make ECHS a Christian school for Erika, are the assemblies, which include scripture reading and singing, the attitude of some people, the extra-curricular activities, and the way students learn together. Erika was especially fond of her experiences on the sports teams. Praying before games made her feel different and she liked the feeling.

> The teams can get so close. In volleyball, it was just amazing what happened with our team. We grew so close and we were even praying before every game. I thought that was really good how the coach started with that and that really brought us closer and helped us work together. The results were awesome. And they have been trying to get soccer going this year. I think that's really good that they're really trying to get more things going because it is hard with not very much funding and being a small school, but I think that's really good. I think that's the best part about this school.

When asked about perspective in classes Erika pointed out two classes, Social Studies and CALM, as classes that taught her what it means to be a Christian. The topics dealt with in both classes made her think about living the Christian life.

> We learned about grieving and that kind of stuff. You turn to God when you have problems and it's like, when someone wants to commit suicide, we have someone to turn to. And that's what we learn, we're able to turn to God so that's what you should do. It wasn't like you turn to a counsellor or something but the best person to turn to was Him. So I thought that was really good, because I learned that a lot in CALM this year.

Erika also pointed out that it was easy to get to know teachers. She felt that it was easy to establish good relationships with the teachers.

> the teachers are really good and I'm not on the really personal basis, but a couple of them, I can talk to. I just go up to them and have like a normal conversation with them. It's not like a teacher/student relationship, it's like that's kind of broken down. There's no barrier between them. And I think that's really good. It's just a lot more personal. It's like they really want to be around and sometimes it's really good.

Erika did indicate some areas that were problematic. Erika mentioned that the atmosphere at ECHS was similar to that of a public school. She pointed out that drinking and smoking were just as much a part of the lives of ECHS students as they were a part of the lives of students in the public school. Erika also felt that on occasion teachers got too involved in the lives of students. She felt that teachers often over reacted when students were suspected of drinking or when they were seen smoking. She did say that one teacher often accosted one of her friends when this teacher suspected her friend of smoking.

She also felt that there was too much talk among teachers about things that happened with students. She felt that disciplinary consequences should be held in confidence.

Another concern for Erika was the number of cliques at the school. She did say that she would have difficulty recommending the school to new students because she felt new students would have difficulty fitting in. She said:

> I wouldn't recommend it to anyone new because of all the cliques and stuff like that. If someone new came to our school they wouldn't fit in. Maybe we're just not open enough. It's not like we're snobs or anything, but yeah, just a little too cliquey.

Erika's lived experience at ECHS has been a positive one. She recognizes that, in her opinion, not all was the way it should be. She did feel, however, like she was in a Christian school. She got a lot out of some of the courses and she was able to develop good relationships with the teachers. She did think the school was not as inviting as it could be, a complaint that has become common.

Portrait #3

Joel described ECHS as a school that wasn't much different than any other school in the city. He said:

> I'm sure it would be the same way if I went to a different school, public school. I've never been to another school so I can't really compare, but I'm pretty sure that if you go to other schools, they're not much different.

Joel liked most of the teachers because they really supported the students. He also felt that the relationships between students were quite

positive. He said that everyone in the school got along pretty well. A big reason for the positive feelings towards one another was because most students thought the same way on many issues.

The one main concern that Joel expressed had a lot to do with his view of how those who were on the basketball team were treated. Joel felt that those on the team were treated specially.

> There's one thing that bugs me. The whole school's basketball ranking and if you're not on the basketball team then you don't really amount to anything. That's how I feel. At noon hour and stuff, we try to get floor hockey intramurals going but it always just goes unnoticed. It seems to me, if you're not on the basketball team then the teachers don't give you the time of day.
>
> The basketball people and the people on sports teams get the breaks in class. Like if their homework's not done it's no big deal because they had a big tournament or something like that. It's just that they're allowed to slack off and get extensions a lot easier than other people. I don't think that's fair. Plus, then in gym, you like to do other things other than just playing basketball.

The comments about an emphasis on sports have been painfully obvious.

A minor concern for Joel was that he felt the school was too strict. When asked about the discipline policy at ECHS he replied:

> I think they're a little too strict.
> In other schools you are allowed way more skips. Three skips is a little harsh I think. Sometimes you just don't feel like going to class and you catch some flack. Otherwise, it's pretty good. I've had no problems with it, personally.

Joel did not feel that there was anything particularly Christian or unchristian about how discipline was administered at ECHS.

Portrait #4

Dave's lived experience at ECHS reflects boredom with school in general. When asked if he was happy with ECHS he said that he was bored but that his boredom disclosed on overall dislike for school. "It doesn't matter what school I go to, I'd still be begrudgingly going to school." Dave felt that school was too controlling.

> there's just too much control.
>
> Seems like control, like three D.T.'s and you got a suspension, and stuff like that.
>
> It's annoying. Mostly annoying, because if you're late for a class, and can't help it, or some stupid little reason then you have to sit there for half an hour in D.T. -- there's no point.
>
> I have to admit they need it to be far less strict. Allow more skips.
>
> Give the kids more freedom. Once you abuse your freedom then you should be punished, but you should be given a chance at least to show that you can handle it. When you enter it, anyway, you should be given a chance.

Dave had some mixed feelings when it came to the question of whether or not he felt like he was being respected as an individual. At one point he stated: "Sometimes I get the feeling I'm treated like I'm not as old as I am." At another point in the interview, when asked if he felt teachers respected him, he answered in the affirmative.

Dave felt like there was good school spirit. He felt there was a lot of support for the school teams and other extra-curricular activities. However, Dave didn't feel like there was anything different at ECHS. He could not come up with anything that, in his opinion, was distinctly Christian about the school.

> They're not religious in school.
>
> Same as any other school, basically.
>
> It's just, I don't know, just treated the same. I had friends from Shep, and it's basically all the same. Just a lot less people here.
>
> I feel like what I'm getting here, I could get anywhere else,
>
> There's not much difference, no. It's just smaller.

Dave did not seem very interested in school. He could see nothing that made him think he was at a Christian school. It seemed as if ECHS was one school that could not come close to meeting Dave's needs. Perhaps it was the school's perceived emphasis on academics or athletics. Besides his need for more freedom and a larger school, Dave could not articulate what it was that made him so unhappy at ECHS. He did express a desire to attend a larger school in the city where there would be more curriculum options.

Portrait #5

Karin's experience at ECHS was very different from Dave's experiences. Karin enjoys the small school atmosphere and the sense of community that has developed at ECHS. She says:

> I found that community is really good in this school, and I can't imagine going to a public school. Actually, I'd be kind of afraid to go in a public school because it's so big, and I've heard from other people, 'oh yeah, I only have so many friends', but in this school I know a lot of people. I don't know everybody, but I know a lot of people from grade 11 and 12, so, I think that's really important to just get this community going. So you can just freely talk with one another. We have a lot of fun that way, too. I think that's one of the most

> important, community, instead of just being a number in a different high school.

Karin feels respected in the community. She feels that students and teachers accept and respect her for who she is.

When asked what things dissatisfied her about the school, especially in relation to the Christian direction, Karin said that some of the topics that were discussed in class were, in her opinion, unchristian. She also said that, on the whole the courses at ECHS were taught from a Christian perspective.

When asked about discipline Karin said that she didn't get in trouble much but that:

> it's important to have rules. If you don't live by them, then sure, you get privileges taken away. You can't be real lax in everything, otherwise, it's just not going to work as a community. I can see now that the rules can't be super-strict saying you can't do this, can't do this. It has to be more like, you can do this, but you can't go to the extent of doing this...
>
> I guess if it happens once or twice - let it go, it's going to happen, you can't do anything about it. But if it happens repeatedly, I think the school should get involved and say, 'hey, look, you know, you're not showing the right attitude, you're not representing our school that great'. Especially if visitors are coming in, then a lot of time that just happens to be the day that something's going on or somebody swears their head off or somebody's in a fight - it doesn't represent our school as very Christian.

Karin expresses a need for order, to maintain community, but in her opinion discipline was not to be overbearing or too strict.

Devotional activities and extra-curricular activities were all very satisfying to Karin. She found them to be encouraging and upbuilding. She did not really

get too involved in extra-curricular activities but she did feel that for those that were involved they were a positive experience. She did not feel that those that were involved in sports activities were treated special by teachers. She did feel that students that were involved in sports tended to stick together.

Portrait #6

Overall Darrell's experience at ECHS has been positive. He has enjoyed his classes and the teachers, for the most part, have been good to him.

> I've been pretty lucky, actually. Classes I've been in have been pretty good, and the teachers, I mean, haven't even been too bad.

> Yeah, it has been pretty good. I've been stuck with a good class and pretty good teachers and stuff, so it's been pretty good for me.

The things that Darrell sees as the most positive were the school's atmosphere and the relationships that he was able to develop with other students.

> Mainly just the atmosphere in the school. Just, how it's small and you know everybody in the school and there's no real, like nobody's really an outcast or anything. Just the atmosphere, togetherness or something in the school. Like, there's no real division between grade 10, 11 and 12's. Everybody kind of hangs around with everybody.

Darrell's answer to the question of how he felt students in the school got along was:

> Pretty good. Well, you got people that hang around together a lot, but then you also got, like, there's no real big separation between grades or to even students in the grade. Like, you got a couple people that you know are really good friends, that you hang around with all the time, but, you can consider probably everybody else in the school, too, if you know them.

The close community and the positive friendships have been a real positive part of Darrell's life at ECHS.

Darrell also felt that the courses he was taking did in fact challenge him in his Christian faith. He felt that most courses were taught from a Christian perspective. The courses which he mentioned that had the most impact on him were CALM and Biology. In spite of the fact that the courses were generally positive and his relationships with the teachers were positive he did feel that at times teachers were not very encouraging. He related one experience in which he felt that he was not given any encouragement to pass a course. This lack of encouragement made him give up on the course and he failed miserably.

Darrell hasn't had too many problems with discipline so he felt uncomfortable answering questions on that. He did say that he felt schools should have rules.

> All schools are going to have to have rules. You're going to have to have like lates and skips, otherwise people would just be taking off all the time. Someone was saying that in the public schools people are getting like, a hundred and forty lates or skips and stuff. That's no good.

When it came to formal devotional activities Darrell felt that they were a positive thing for him and the school. At times devotions in the morning were a bit haphazard but overall they worked.

Darrell's experiences at ECHS do not reflect someone who is overly excited, but reflect someone who is satisfied. He points to areas which, in his view, are areas of strength, the developed community and positive relationships, and he also mentioned a problem that he had with the school, namely the occasional lack of teacher encouragement .

Portrait #7

The experiences that Rick has had at ECHS have been very positive. He speaks fondly of a close knit community where one does not just learn but one develops every aspect of one's being.

> I think as students we've all been together and we can become 'cliquey' and, I don't know, we come to school and it's not just this school, like it's not somewhere where we learn because to us it's become you know, our society. Christian School, part of the Christian church, we have Christian friends and while we're here at school, you know, these are the people we hang around with all the time.

> Well I think it comes in being in this community, too. And some people say you're sheltered, you know, being in this community. But I think by seeing people in this community, the Christian community, I've seen how some people live, some people are able, you know, to live their lives. And that's been an influence on me. I think that's the greatest factor. Like in the Christian school, I'm in the Christian community seeing 'well, I want to live a Christian life' because I really admire some people in the community, and I'd like to be like that.

Rick talks about this close community fondly but he realizes that there are dangers. He did mention, as did many others, that because of the close community people tended to form cliques and that there was a lot of pressure on people to a part of those cliques.

> And then there comes that 'cliquishness'. You know, you have to be part of a certain crowd because, you know, we've been together and we're just known as Christians in a Christian School. And you have to have some sort of identity. People carry that identity to extremes you know. Because in a school there's people who say 'there's the smokers who go outside', 'they're the jocks', 'they're the smart ones,' and there's too much pressure that way to join

> a group. And I think that's a result of the closeness of the community.

In Rick's opinion, ECHS is really a Christian school because of the teachers. He truly sees the teachers as a caring group willing to go out of their way to support the students. When asked what he felt were some of the positive aspects of the school, Rick replied:

> For sure the teachers. All the teachers are really supportive. They'll do that extra little thing. I don't know, it's just that they care more for you than just another student; another mark going through the school. I'm really happy that there's the kind of teachers that there are in our school.
>
> To me, the school is very Christian in the way that all the teachers are. I don't know why guys need such an impact, but I find all the teachers are supportive and they'll stop in the hall and they'll talk to you. They're concerned about more than just how your doing in school, and I think that's very nice to have; someone with authority who wants to know what you're doing next year, what your faith life is like.

Rick has found the formal devotional activities to be a positive thing. He has enjoyed the Friday morning singing and he felt that the assemblies were affective. He also mentioned that he felt students should be more involved in leading devotions.

> Well now that I'm through, pretty well through high school, I say this with a little more ease, knowing I won't have to do it. But to see the students prepare devotions once in a while would, might change the whole effect of devotions, I think. You know, people would look, look into their own faith life once in a while instead of hearing the teachers or the writer of a book's faith life. I think it would be healthy to focus on that every once in a while.

Rick is quite positive about the school. His final remarks reflects this positive feeling.

> This school does what it's supposed to do. It tries to lead us, you know, on the right path. When we're doing something wrong, they'll say what we're doing wrong, if we're swearing or something. They'll say that. They try to show us how life can be led right through a Christian way by how education is led in a Christian way. And it educates us. And for that reason, I can't see what you can improve on the school.
>
> I think there are some good people, well yeah, most everybody is a good person in the school. It's the people in the school getting together, and some people will turn out not to be good, but if I look at the people alone, most of the people, and say would I like my children to turn out like that, I'd say yes.

Chapter 7

Synthesis and Conclusion

Introduction

ECHS is a Christian school that identifies itself with a Reformed vision for education. This tradition professes a world and life view that claims that all of life is religion. The integration of faith and learning is essential in all areas. This study was designed to see if the practice of this Christian direction was satisfactory to parents and students associated with the school. Could ECHS be defined as a school out of the Reformed tradition? Did the way in which ECHS developed Christian community, or the way in which it taught students to know what a Christian's place in the world was, reflect its Reformed Christian roots? Were teacher/student relationships, discipline practices, evaluation, extra-curricular activities, or the ways in which ECHS helped students to develop a personal faith in Jesus Christ, reflective of what a Reformed school should look like? Were the courses taught from a Christian perspective? Could students see clearly the ways in which teachers expressed perspective in the classroom? Was the behaviour of students an expression of Christian love and "bearing one another's burdens?" Essentially, what is being asked is whether or not ECHS has educated for "Responsive Discipleship" to the satisfaction of the parents and students.

This chapter will synthesize the data from the questionnaires and the interviews and make recommendations that will hopefully help ECHS to continue to develop its strengths and work on its weaknesses. The questions listed above will serve as a guide for this discussion.

Community Development

The community that has developed at ECHS was experienced by most students as supportive, caring, and helpful. Students felt that, for the most part, teachers were approachable and interested in them. However, students also saw ECHS as a school filled with cliques, making it difficult for newcomers to be integrated into the school. Parents saw the community at ECHS as being somewhat unwelcoming and unwilling to accept input and help from the supporting community. On the one hand there is evidence of a positive atmosphere and yet, on the other, one gets the feeling that not all is well. Several students feel right at home, have lots of friends, and are able to start good relationships with teachers. Others feel like they are just not a part of the school. Parents have expressed a desire to get more involved in the school but it seems as if they aren't given the chance.

ECHS must continue to work on developing positive relationships with all of its students and with the parents. For the students who find it difficult to feel at home at ECHS, the school must discover what needs are not being met. They must seek ways to provide for these needs. Somehow these students must be drawn into the community and feel valued as full members. An increased variety in extra-curricular activities may be beneficial in this area.

Students, teachers, graduates, and parents were also quite concerned that the way students treated each other was inconsistent with the Christian direction of ECHS. It appears that the transformational ideal should be practiced within the walls of ECHS. Students treatment of each other is probably quite typical but if Christian are to be involved in transforming activities than ECHS could start at home.

Parents should also be afforded opportunities that will integrate them as full and valued members of the school community. ECHS should continue to pursue the establishment of a parent council. This council should be active in all areas of student life including social events, extra-curricular activities, what happens in the classroom, and how the money is spent. These parents should be active in the school and should be able to motivate other parents to join in as well. The more everyone feels a valued part of the community and a contributor to that community the more we can join in conversation and discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

A Christian's Place in the World

Schools out of the Reformed tradition often describe this tradition as the ability to prepare students for life as Christians in the world. Courses are designed to deal with issues from a Biblical perspective. ECHS, it appears, has been able to capture much of that perspective in its courses. Students and parents have expressed satisfaction with the school in this area. The courses that have been especially identified as providing this perspective have been the religious courses, CALM, English, Social Studies, and Biology. These courses may be the courses that have built in advantages to teaching perspective as issues can easily be brought up and discussed, but teachers of these courses may be able to share ways that have helped them accomplish the task of teaching out of a Christian perspective. This dialogue should be a regular part of discussions among teachers at ECHS.

Another aspect of teaching out of the Reformed tradition is to teach students for service. It became clear, especially in the interviews, that ECHS

was not making it clear enough to its students that service is expected of Christians. To make the point more clearly it may be time to build a service component right into the curriculum. Perhaps one could ask students to volunteer at one of the many old age homes, or at schools for the handicapped. Students may be able to teach Sunday school, or help with reading programs at a local elementary school. A service component will give hands-on experience and may provide students with a true feeling of what it means to bear on another's burdens, and to seek "shalom". The courses that may be able to build it in are the religious courses. They are certainly the most flexible in terms of their curriculum. As well, this service component may be built in as a part of certain topics that are discussed in other classes. When the environment is discussed in Science it may be valuable to organize a clean up crew and clean up an area of Edmonton parkland. The grade 11 service project must also be maintained at all costs. It is a real expression of what ECHS is trying to do.

Teacher/Student Relationships

Are the ways in which teachers and students relate reflective of the vision for the school? Are students and parents satisfied with the relationship? The data suggests that ECHS has been able to establish a climate in which close student/teacher relationships can develop. Generally students have experienced teachers as willing to give of their time to ensure students receive quality Christian education. ECHS can look to this area as a strength that should be nurtured. However, the data also suggests that mistakes have been made. Some students and parents have had experiences that were not very positive. Students have fallen through the cracks, have experienced teachers

that were not supportive, and have seen teachers that have shown favouritism. These incidences are serious. They are often the ones that are remembered for a long time. Grade 12 students vividly remembered these incidents from their Grade 10 years. Parents recalled these incidents from previous children that attended ECHS. These incidents have to be avoided. Perhaps more dialogue between teachers, parents, students, and administration concerning ways in which students are dealt with should be more commonplace.

Discipline

Discipline, in the Reformed perspective, is meant to be used as a tool to provide a safe caring community and a method for discipling students to adopt lives that reflect their Christianity. Procedures are put into place to give order to the institution and to make the environment conducive to learning. The procedures are meant as guidelines. If the guidelines are not followed measures are used to bring order back. For the most part the guidelines, as written rules, aren't really necessary. They are a part of what is normally expected. You treat each other with respect, you come on time, you attend classes, etc.

The need for rules was apparent. Some students indicated that the rules were too restrictive but overall most saw the rules as necessary. Very few people felt that ECHS should become a stricter school. Some confusion was expressed as to what the rules were and ECHS may need to look at the way they are written down to ensure complete understanding, but the biggest problem came in a discussion of how the rules were being enforced. Several comments were made claiming that the school was inconsistent. Others felt

that students should be "cut some slack" when it came to enforcement. The way in which ECHS chased students down for lates and skips was seen as cumbersome and time consuming. Some of the respondents felt that rules were more strongly enforced with students that were late than with students who were caught drinking at dances, a more serious offence.

It appears that ECHS may have to do some explaining and may have to look, once again, at its policy for lates and skips. If students are treated differently from one another, than ECHS should be able to explain it. Often the reason for perceived inconsistencies is reflective of a vision for schooling that commits the school to holding onto one of its weaker members, to bear the burden of someone who is in trouble. It may be important for the school to explain itself in those terms to avoid the problem of perceived unfairness. The concept of dealing with students as individuals, even in discipline, is something that ECHS should continue to pursue. It's something that parents and students want and it is reflective of the Reformed vision for the school. Perhaps lates and skips may also need to be dealt with in a different way. Perhaps parents, students, and teachers could set up a forum of some kind to put together more appropriate guidelines. Perhaps the parent council could give some advice on how to deal with the issues. Somehow the issue has to be raised and solved.

Evaluation

Very few people brought up the issue of formal evaluation. The questionnaires indicated some uncertainty with whether or not the way in which evaluation was done at ECHS was the Christian way. The ECHS community may want to study further the issues involved in evaluation and should engage

in some formal discussions that would lead to an understanding of how students are evaluated and perhaps to lead to a well-defined, distinctly Christian way to evaluate its students. A good start for this exercise could be to read VanBrummelen's book, "Walking With God in the Classroom," (1988) chapter 8.

Extra-curricular Activities

Do the extra-curricular activities at ECHS reflect what parents and students want and are they a reflection of the vision for the school? Clearly the majority of respondents who chose to talk about this issue felt that ECHS needed more opportunities for students to get involved with activities other than athletics. Many described the school as being too dominated by sports. The program itself was not really criticized as many spoke highly of the quality of the programs. The solution may be not to downsize the sports program but to increase the size of programs in other areas and to perhaps add new activities here and there. The possibility of such new activities may only be possible with more involvement of parents. Student artwork, abilities in drama, or abilities in industrial arts, should also be given more credit or recognition. Hopefully, along with increasing the number and size of other programs, there would come the celebrations.

One activity that has come up often as a possibility is music. There didn't seem to be a desire for a full music program but there was a desire for a choir or band as an extra-curricular activity. Perhaps ECHS could begin by starting a worship band. Students and parents often sighted singing as a way in which formal worship activities could be enhanced. A worship band could include students who wish to sing and students that wish to play musical instruments.

The band could be used in Friday morning singsongs and assemblies. The desire is there. Startup costs would not prohibit the activity and many needs could be met.

Emphasis on Personal Faith Development

Does ECHS give enough emphasis to developing a personal faith life? People have pointed to the formal devotional activities as the most obvious way in which this development takes place at ECHS. For the most part there was satisfaction with the number of times ECHS has devotional times. There was some indication that the activities could be more meaningful. Some students felt that the morning devotions were hurried and did not really speak to them. As well, the devotional assemblies were often seen as ineffective.

Again, it may be important for the teachers to enter into dialogue with the students on methods of improving these devotional activities. It was already mentioned that a worship band may help the devotional assemblies. Some parents and students have said that it might be important to give students more responsibility for leading morning devotions. They may need some guidance but it would make them more accountable. They may also see it as an opportunity to bring up topics that are dear to their hearts.

Although some parents and graduates mentioned that ECHS should challenge students to make personal commitments to Jesus Christ most, in the study felt that this may not necessarily be the job of the school. It is a job for each individual and the church but perhaps not the job of the school as institution. Devotionals should be seen as things that allow for people to feel support, comfort, to be challenged to service, and to be renewed in their faith

and love for Jesus Christ. When assemblies are being planned more effort should be given to making this planning more of a communal event. Ideas should be tossed about on a regular basis and those participating could be given direction as to how to make their participation more effective. Ideas for morning devotions should also be a regular part of discussions held in the school.

Transformational, Conformist, or Isolation

Should ECHS provide education that is transformational, conformist, or isolationist? Throughout the investigation several comments were made that indicated preferences for either one of the three mindsets. However, there was no clear indication from the respondents as to what mindset they preferred. Many of the respondents made comments that could be classified as conformist and on the same questionnaire or in the same interview they also made comments that could be classified as transformational.

Although the transformational mindset is the closest to the traditional, Reformed perspective it is possible to incorporate aspects of isolationist thinking into the vision without watering down the traditional perspective. To provide a safe, secure environment, ideas congruent with isolationist thinking, should be a goal of the school. However, to isolate children to the point of protectionism or to segregate children to the point of refusing admittance to students who may not be a part of the church community is, in my view, unacceptable and perhaps unrealistic. To educate students for the world of work an idea congruent with the conformist mindset should be a goal of the school. In this context we see that ECHS should provide a solid academic program to give its students every

advantage. However, to have an education program that sees this as primary is unacceptable. The goal is to integrate faith and learning. Faith has everything to do with Math, Physical Education, History, and everything done in the school. To simply take up a task in society, without applying your stated faith to that task will beg the question "whom or what do you serve?"

Christian Education that reflects a transformational mindset should be pursued. Education that seeks to educate students to delight in creation, to despair at all signs of sin, to rejoice in redemption through Jesus Christ, and to serve God through a life of service is the goal. This life of service is characterized by developing one's talents, bearing one another's burdens, and seeking shalom.

Summary of Recommendations

1. To provide all students with opportunities to develop their gifts by providing a well rounded program of extra-curricular activities. These activities should include opportunities to get involved in music, fine arts, sports, and industrial education.

2. To draw the parents into the school community by soliciting their involvement in various activities in the school through the parent council.

3. To ensure that parents feel welcomed when they enter the school.

4. Teachers should enter into frequent dialogue as to how to accomplish the task of teaching from a Christian perspective.

5. To build a service component into the religious courses.

6. To take advantage of service opportunities when the topic is conducive in classes other than the religious classes.

7. To avoid incidents of students feeling unsupported by teachers, open communication between students, parents, and teachers should be encouraged.

8. To review the way the rules of the school are written so that complete clarity is experienced.

9. To explain to the supporting community that perceived inconsistencies in discipline is reflective of a vision for schooling that commits the school to hold onto one of its weaker members and to bear the burden of someone who is in trouble.

10. To review once again, with the help of the parent council, the policy for lates and skips.

11. To study further the issues involved in evaluation and engage in some formal discussions that would lead to an understanding of how students are evaluated.

12. To enter into dialogue with the students with the intent of improving devotional activities.

13. To make devotional assemblies more of a community effort.

14. To affirm the transformational vision for the school, articulate this vision, and apply all that it stands for to the day-to-day practice of schooling.

References

An Overview of Independent Education in Canada. (1994). *Federation of Independent Schools in Canada.* Edmonton.

Bergen, J.J., (1992). *Canadian private schools: A challenge or an alternative.* Edmonton: University of Alberta.

Beversluis, H., (1971). *Christian philosophy of education.* Grand Rapids MI.: Christian Schools International.

Borg, Walter R. & Gall, Meredith D. (1989). *Educational Research: An Introduction (5th Edition).* New York; Longman.

Christian Schools International, (1993). *From Vision to Action.* Grand Rapids, MI.: Christian Schools International.

Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. T. (1979). *Quasi-experimentation: Design and analysis issues for field settings.* Chicago: Rand McNally.

DeBoer, P., (1992). *Educating Christian teachers for Responsive discipleship.* Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America.

Edmonton Society for Christian Education. (1993, Oct.). *Board Minutes.* Edmonton.

Fullan, M., (1985). Change process and strategies at the local level. *The Elementary School Journal, 84* (3), 391-420.

Glenn, C.L., (1988). *The myth of the common school.* Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press.

Hollaar, L. A., (1989). *Faith and Culture in the Governance of Calvinistic/Reformed Christian Schools.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta

Hull, J.E., (1993). *Christian Education and the Deep Structure of Schooling.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto.

Kaufman, S., (1992). *Student Ownership of the Mission of Selected Christian Schools.* Paper presented at the CSI Convention, Toronto.

North York Board of Education. (1981). *The admission and withdrawal of elementary school pupils to and from North York public schools: A survey of parents.* Willowdale.

Peters, F., & Ingram, E.J., (1992, October). *Satisfaction with small catholic schools.* Edmonton, AB.: University of Alberta.

Rosenholtz, S. (1987). Workplace conditions that affect teacher quality and commitment: Implications for the design of teacher induction programs. *The Elementary School Journal, 89* (4), 421-40.

Stronks, G.G., & Blomberg, D., (1993). *A vision with a task.* Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Books.

The Public Funding of Private Schools in Canada. (1992). *Canadian Education Association.* Toronto.

VanBrummelen, H., (1988). *Walking with God in the Classroom.* Burlington: Welch Publishing Co.

VanDyk, J., (1985). *Teaching Christianly: An Approach.* Unpublished paper. Sioux Centre IA.: Dordt College.

Vryhof, S., Brouwer, J., Ulstein, S., & VanderArk, D., (1990). *12 Affirmations, Reformed Christian Schooling for the 21st Century.* Grand Rapids MI.: Baker Books.

West Edmonton Christian High School. (1994, May). *Satisfaction with Christian schools.* Edmonton.

Wolterstorff, N., (1980). *Educating for Responsible Action.* Grand Rapids, Mi.: Christian Schools International.

Appendix A

Covering Letter

Dear Parents of an ECHS Student, Past or Present

My name is Peter Buisman. As many of you may know, I am presently attending the University of Alberta. As part of my studies, I am doing research on the Christian direction at Edmonton Christian High School. I believe it is important to revisit the mission statement of the school from time to time and to do this as a community. To obtain information from the community regarding the vision for ECHS, and to discover areas of growth potential and areas of strength, I would like you to fill out the enclosed questionnaire.

This study has been approved by the board of the Edmonton Society for Christian Education. At the completion of the study I hope to have an understanding of the levels of satisfaction that students and parents have with the Christian vision, as practiced, at ECHS. With the help of the information received, I believe, ECHS will continue to grow as a Christian learning community, with a vision that is acceptable to the entire support network. I understand that we sometimes have an aversion to filling out questionnaires but I believe your responses are very important. I would appreciate it if you would fill out the questionnaire and return it in the self-addressed stamped envelop by April 21, 1995.

If you have had more than one child attend ECHS, feel free to focus on just one of your children, in the answering of the questions, or you may answer the questions from a more general perspective.

Please understand that all the responses given will remain anonymous and the information received will be passed on in a way that will ensure confidentiality. Also understand that you are under no obligation to reply to this request. It is strictly volunteer.

Again, I would appreciate your cooperation and if you have any concerns or questions please feel free to contact me at 458-8127.

Sincerely

Peter Buisman

Questionnaire

Satisfaction with the Christian emphasis at Edmonton Christian High School

Student Questionnaire

Please respond to the following questionnaire according to the instructions provided.

The responses will help me to understand how students feel about their education with respect to the Christian emphasis at the school. Please do not write your name on the questionnaire. All the responses given will remain anonymous. Information from the surveys will be passed on in a way that will ensure confidentiality.

Please return the questionnaire to your instructor.

Student Questionnaire

Please circle the response which best describes how satisfied you are with each of the following items.
If a written response is required please feel free to continue your responses on the back pages of the questionnaire.

HS - Highly Satisfied
S - Satisfied
U - Uncertain
D - Dissatisfied
HD - Highly dissatisfied
NA - If the statement is not applicable or if you feel you have insufficient information about the item

I am satisfied:

1. with the extent to which my expectations of **Christian** Education are being met.	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
2. with the way in which the school gives me the feeling of being in a Christian community.	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
3. with how well I am being taught what it means to be a Christian in this world.	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
4. with the way in which my faith has been developed and nurtured at ECHS.	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
5. that I am being treated as an individual with my own gifts and talents.	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
6. that the rules that students have to follow reflect the Christian emphasis in the school.	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
7. that the evaluation procedures reflect the Christian emphasis in the school.	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
8. with the amount of help teachers give to students who need help.	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
9. with the amount of positive attention that teachers give to students' opinions.	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
10. with the number of opportunities students have to experience devotional times together.	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
11. with the quality of these devotional times.	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA

12. with the number of opportunities to express my faith openly.	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
13. with the way students express Christian love in the school.	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
14. with the general behaviour of my fellow students.	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
15. with the way in which students are disciplined when they skip classes.	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
16. with the way in which students are disciplined when they are late for classes.	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
17. with the way in which students are disciplined when they are rude to teachers or fellow students.	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
18. with how well the courses help me to understand important things about life.	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
19. with the number of opportunities that students have to discuss world problems, e.g.environmental issues, world hunger or social injustice.	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
20. with the way in which the present extra-curricular activities promote Christian lifestyle.	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
21. with the number of extra-curricular activities that promote Christian lifestyle.	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA

22. with the Christian content of each of the following subjects.

English	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
Mathematics	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
Physics	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
Chemistry	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
Biology	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
Social studies	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
Religious Meanings	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
CALM	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA

Physical Education	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
French	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
Art	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
Drama	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
Industrial Arts	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
Work Experience	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
Home Economics	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
Business	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA
Accounting	HS	S	U	D	HD	NA

Written Responses

23. Identify, in one or two sentences, what it was about the courses that you were particularly satisfied with, that made you think of them as Christian courses.

24. Identify, in 1 or 2 sentences, what it was about the courses that you were dissatisfied with, that made you think they had little Christian focus.

25. Describe, in one or two sentences, one thing that you experienced at ECHS that made you think about living a Christian life.

26. What things, if any, would you like to have changed at ECHS with regards to the Christian vision for the school?

Feel free to comment on anything else regarding the Christian Vision, as practiced at ECHS, on the back of this sheet.

Interview Schedule

1. Can you identify, perhaps one or two things that you feel has made ECHS a Christian school? Something that really satisfies you about the Christian direction at the school.
   What is it about this one thing that pleases you?

2. Identify one or two things that has given you the least satisfaction with regards to the Christian emphasis at the school.
   What is it about this thing that concerns you?

3. Of all the subjects at the school , identify two that stand out as being subjects that you recognize as having a particular Christian direction.
   If you could, identify, in one or two sentences, what it was about these courses that made you think of them as particularly Christian.

4. Identify 2 subject areas that in your opinion had little Christian focus.
   Again, it would be helpful if you could describe in 1 or 2 sentences what it was about the courses that made you think they had little Christian focus.

5. How is your son being treated at school?
   - -Are his questions answered satisfactorily?
   - -Do you feel the teachers have enough time for him?
   - -Can you give me any examples of times when you felt good because a teacher valued one of his comments?
   - -Can you give an example of a time when you felt he was not listened too when he felt he had something important to say?

6. Are you satisfied that ECHS is promoting positive Christian lifestyle?
   Is there enough opportunity for student's to express their faith?
   Is there enough opportunity for student's to worship together?
   How do students treat one another at school?
   Give me an example.

11. Do you feel discipline procedures at ECHS reflect what you feel Christian discipline ought to be?

12. Are you satisfied that the extra-curricular activities at ECHS Christian activities that reveal Christian virtues and ideals?
    Name one thing, with regards to extra-curricular activities, that you have experienced as being particularly Christian.
    Name one thing that wasn't.

13. Can you name anything at ECHS that made your child consider living a Christian life?

14. What advice would you give the school to give it a stronger identity as a Christian school?

15. Is there anything else you would like to say about ECHS that hasn't been covered in this interview?

Appendix B

EXPLAINING THE SCHOOLS of the EDMONTON SOCIETY FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

MISSION STATEMENT

The Edmonton Christian Schools aim to provide an education that is Christian; that is, shaped by the Christian faith. This Christian faith develops from an understanding of Scripture as reflected in the Reformed heritage. This faith finds its broadest expression in the entire program of instruction. Students are encouraged to develop value judgments which are grounded in the knowledge of our relationship to God, our understanding of ourselves, the knowledge of our relationship to others, our relationship to the world, and the acknowledgment of the Lordship of Christ over all.

In this setting our schools seek to promote sound scholarship and pedagogy, earnest effort, and an obligation to use our talents fully in response to a divine calling to faith. Faithfulness demands a life of action and involvement, and seeks personal piety, integrity, and social responsibility. It recognizes that service to God, others, and ourselves is possible and necessary in all activities, professions, and walks of life. It asserts that the life of Christian service must be lived now. Accordingly our schools provide opportunities for students to experience and apply their learning to Christian action and service. The aim of our schools is to prepare students to live responsive and productive lives of faith to the glory of God in a contemporary society -- not merely lives that have a place for religion, or lives which formally relate religious commitment to academic disciplines, but lives which in every part, in every manifestation, in their very essence, are Christian.

THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

God has made Himself known in creation and specifically in Jesus Christ and in the Holy Scriptures. The Bible, as the record and tool of His redeeming work, is in its entirety God's infallible revelation, the teachings of which are foundational to the uniqueness of a Christian education.

WE THEREFORE AFFIRM THAT:

1) In the beginning God -- Father, Son and Spirit -- who is one, called this world into being and gave it shape and order. The Father reveals His love in His Son, fully God, yet our true human model, who gives us access to the Father in faith, fellowship with one another in love, and freedom to live in the world with hope. The Holy Spirit is always at work in creation and in history seeking to draw all people toward the fullness of truth and love which is in Christ Jesus.

2) The Bible is the basis of knowledge in all matters of faith and practice, and teaches that God is the Creator of heaven and earth, and furthermore, upholds and directs all things according to His will and power. The faithfulness of our great Provider gives sense to our days and hope to our years.
The future is secure for our world belongs to God. The best explanation of the purpose of creation, the meaning of history, the role of governments and culture, and the benefit of creative literature, music and art is found in this biblical world view.

3) As God's creatures we are made in His image to represent and to reflect Him on earth and live in loving communion with Him. By sovereign appointment we are caretakers: loving our neighbour, tending the creation, and meeting our needs. God uses our skills in the unfolding and well-being of His world.

4) All spheres of life -- marriage, family, school and society, work and worship, play and art -- now bear the influence of our rebellion. Like our first parents, we have become victims of our own sin. While justly angry, God yet turned His face in love to a world bent on destruction. He remembered His covenanting promise to reconcile the world to Himself: He has come among us in Jesus Christ. With patience and tender care He set out on the long road of redemption to reclaim the lost as His people and the world as His kingdom. Our world, troubled an flawed, still belongs to God. He holds it together and gives us hope.

5) Jesus is the only source of salvation for us. It is only through His redemptive work on the cross that we are born again and restored to fellowship with God. As covenant partners, called to faithful obedience and set free for joyful praise, we offer our hearts and lives to do God's work in His world.

6) Through the reconciling work of Jesus Christ we find our new place in the world. When the Holy Spirit establishes His rule in our hearts, than His kingdom of love and light is exposed in every area of our life. The task of God's people is to make disciples of all nations and be developers of culture, reconcilers within society, and caretakers of nations, prophetic truth-tellers and truth-doers, priestly healers of people and creation, kingly administrators of God's world.

THE PLACE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

God calls parents supported by the Christian community to nurture children in harmony with His revelation. Christian schools, complementing the roles of the home and the church, endeavor to provide an environment for the nurture of our children in understanding of God's creation -- a world to live in. That environment must reveal the providence and wonderful works and grace of God, and it must foster a faithful, loving, and obedient way of living before God.

WE THEREFORE MAINTAIN THAT:

1) The primary responsibility for educating our children belongs to parents: it is a God-given task (Deuteronomy 6: 4 - 9). Surrounded by love and care in their daily welfare, our children should learn by Christian example, the value of a disciplined life in our homes. In marriage and family we serve God by reflecting His covenant love in life-long loyalty, and by teaching His ways, so that children may know Jesus as their Lord and learn to use their gifts in a life of joyful service. Our children need to be aware of God's call to faithfulness and their need to respond to the command to love God, their neighbour, and creation.

2) Our school is an extension of the home, and, therefore, of the parental responsibility to "train up a child in the way she/he should go" (Proverbs 22:6a). The school is to strive to place God and His infallible Word at the centre of all instruction and policies developed. Instruction is given in all subjects needed to prepare our children for participation in society: the church, the work force, the economy and the state. We believe that the teaching in the Christian school must at all times be characterized by a positive faith in and subjection to God's Word, a genuine love for God, humanity and creation, a sincere appreciation of the believer's mandate and an appropriate rebuttal of all modern skepticism and unbelief against the truths of God's Word.

3) Our children have been created in the image of God, capable of learning, knowing and obeying the truth of God's Word and His creation. Although sin has diminished that ability, we believe that in Christ are all the wisdom, knowledge and love necessary to restore them as God's imagers, worthy of respect. As forgiven and forgiving imagers of God, students -- like and with their teachers -- have inherent worth and inherent responsibility: love experienced becomes the basis for love demonstrated. Embodiment of faith requires imitation. The wisdom of the ages tells us that children and young people are influenced by observing those around them.

4) The participation of the Christian community in the establishment and maintenance of Christian schools is foundational. We believe that God's covenantal promise embraces parents, their children, and the entire Christian community. The Christian school community seeks to share our gifts - knowledge and wisdom, support and encouragement, time and resources -- readily and cheerfully to the advantage of others, especially to the family of God. The Christian school encourages students to model this kind of sharing.

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

God has given us the capacity to learn, through observation, experience and instruction in a lifelong enterprise. We believe that God has entered into a covenant or promising relationship with His people; while God promises faithfulness, believing parents are obliged to educate their children in the fear of the Lord. As our children

grow older parents draw from educators valuable skills to assist them in the process of change and growth necessary in our children's lives. Christian schools serve as a training ground for children, who, by the grace of God, have a share in influencing the culture and society in which they live. We believe that the Christian school educates children for a life of obedience to God. Obedience is stressed by integrating faith and learning, a calling to discipleship, and developing students to the fullness of their ability.

WE THEREFORE PROPOSE THAT:

1) The entire program of instruction in our Christian schools should direct us in the knowledge of our relationship to God, others and the world, our understanding of ourselves, and to the acknowledgment of the Lordship of Christ over all.

2) Students must be shown that Christians stand in the world as dissenters and as reformers, basing both word and deed on love for the Lord above all and love for one's neighbour as one's self.

3) The Christian schools must enlist strongly dedicated teachers of appropriate academic and moral standards to join in the nurturing of our children. The teachers must at all times seek to reflect and represent by word and example the love of Christ and the honour of God. Within the school's policies and guidelines teachers have authority to deal with establishing a positive learning environment and to deal with breakdowns in that learning environment.

4) The curriculum and methodology used in our Christian schools must be based on the conviction that knowledge of the Bible and Jesus Christ is essential to the development and growth of the child. This belief calls for the integration of faith and learning. Each subject area, each activity, and the environment as a whole are seen as part of the total truth of God in Christ. By integrating life and studies with the Bible , the Christian school helps students develop a world-view in which a life of faith is not composed of religious activities alongside non-religious activities but one in which God is gratefully served and honoured in all activities. It is a life in which discipleship , self-denial, and cross-bearing are expressed in terms of the society we live in. It is a life of trust in the Lord in all circumstances, of joy in the Lord in all situations.

5) Each student must seek to fulfil his or her learning task to the best of his or her ability. And each student must respond freely to the command to love God, his or her neighbour, and creation. Students, in their development, are required to show ever-increasing responsibility and initiative.

6) Those responsible for the governance of our schools must develop, implement and review policies that embody the objectives of these educational principles. Every relationship with the Christian school community must give evidence of the life-promoting presence of the Holy Spirit. Such leadership must remain aware that it establishes and models the patterns for interaction reflecting Christ's example.

7) While remaining aware of the educational standards of the Province of Alberta, we believe that our Christian schools should be free to function according to the above mentioned principles.

(Adopted Sept. 15, 1987)

Edmonton Christian High's Goals

A Christian school is Christian. Jesus said, "Follow Me."

We strive to show one another the Christian way of life in all subjects and in all activities. Because we are not an isolated fish bowl, we run into different beliefs and views of life, into many different ways of living. In these very real life contexts, we try to affirm your convictions and to encourage your life responses to the Christian way.

A Christian school is also a community. Therefore, Christian love and concern are significant to our tasks of learning and living. As a community we believe that our time and talents are gifts that we abuse, or use in His service. Also, when we fail God and each other, we confess the failing, accept His forgiveness, pick up the pieces, and move on in Christ, the Lord of creation and life.

In order to live as a Christian school community in which you and the staff can grow and further experience Christ in this world, we strive for the following:

A. To increase our understanding and enjoyment of God's world.

Your studying will include plants, animals, earth, space, how we live and fail to live in this world with each other. You will explore and develop understandings of how each thing and person is unique and how, at the same time, each fits with the other to make life and the creation whole.

B. To enrich your understanding of how God wants us to live.

God has a place and purposeful plan for humankind. We will look for answers to questions about what God wants for His creation and what He wants us to do together, starting now as a school community and for the future.

C. To develop skills and insights to help you live a fuller life.

We all live in a very diversified society where we need many skills and insights into a wide variety of experiences. Each of you has special interests, talents and sensitivities that need to be developed and shared with others. This development and sharing is intended to help us all live more completely as Christian friends, family members, neighbours, citizens, workers, artists, etc.

D. To provide a program which will enable you to unfold as a Christian, to take employment, and to grow further through personal or formal educational experiences.

What we do together at E.C.H.S. is only basic. You will continue to grow as a full, Christian person. For that growth, what we will do together here, hopefully, will encourage you to uncover life for yourself through the enrichments of others and new experiences.

COMMITMENTS:
Who We Are and Who We would Become

From the basic principles of the Edmonton Society for Christian Education it follows that we are committed to particular educational goals, as expressed on the previous page of this handbook. Also, with their authors, we share the following commitments:

A. OUR COMMITMENT TO GOD: We believe in the triune God -- Father, Son and Holy Spirit -- and confess that this faith must find expression in all our thoughts and actions. We dedicate our work to the pursuit of scholarship, recognizing that true knowledge can only be found in Jesus Christ.

B. OUR COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS: We regard every student as sacred before God, Who calls everyone of them to obey His law, and out of concern for their development and citizens of His Kingdom, we dedicate our efforts toward encouraging a wholesome growth of their God-given potentials.

More specifically:

a) We promise to deal justly and impartially with all students, and make professionally responsible judgments concerning their academic, physical, emotional, and other characteristics as required in our school.

b) We promise to teach and to direct each student in such a way that his own experiences become meaningful to him and that he develops a sensitivity to others' responses.

c) We promise to seek improvements in the curriculum and instruction which will lead to educational experiences that are conductive to the wholesome development of every student, according to the goals of our school.

C. OUR COMMITMENT TO PARENTS: We acknowledge the God-given authority of the parents concerning the students' education, consider it a privilege to teach the students according to a plan of learning whose religious direction is determined and accepted mutually by parents and by the teachers. We promise to establish a relationship of mutual confidence with the parents.

Specifically:

a) We promise to cooperate with the parents in the best interest of the students, and to be discreet with information about the students and their parents.

b) We will endeavour to give the parents a fair appraisal of their children's progress at school.

c) We will encourage parents to participate as much as possible in the school and related experiences.

D. OUR COMMITMENTS TO THE PROFESSION AND TO COLLEAGUES: We acknowledge that it is essential to the effective functioning of our school that there be Christian harmony among colleagues. We shall therefore endeavour to maintain an attitude of openness and cooperation, respect and forgiveness towards teaching and administrative colleagues and thus uphold the high calling of bearing the Name. Specifically:

a) We promise to cooperate with our fellow staff members in interpreting our school's plan of learning, in executing school policy, and in suggesting improvements.

b) We promise to take an active role in the affairs of our profession through participation in professional development and curriculum development programs, and thus to promote the welfare of Christian education in general.

c) We promise to support and uphold and aid one another whenever possible, and to stimulate personal and communal development through reflection, prayer, discussion, study and recreation.

E. OUR COMMITMENT TO THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY: We believe that our Christian school is a cultural expression of the Christian community's faith commitment, and that it is our task as educators to make plain to students and to others the relevance of God's Word in life's total experience. Specifically:

a) We promise to foster interest in our school and its program both within and outside our particular Christian community.

b) We promise to adhere to the curriculum plan adopted by our staff and Education Committee, and to give reasonable time and our best efforts to the profession to which we have been called and committed ourselves.

c) We dedicate our work to the growth and development of the Christian community, and desire a harmonious and communal submission in all areas of life to the power of God's Word. For this purpose we shall seek the guidance of Christ in our relations with the students, the parents, the Board of the Society, and all others who support Christ-centered education.

Appendix C

Quantitative Data

I am satisfied with the way in which the school gave me the feeling of being in a Christian community.

Responses:

	HD	D	U	S	HS	NA	Mean
graduate responses		3	3	6	4		3.68
student responses		6	3	24	10	1	3.88
parents of graduates responses		1	3	7	1		3.66
parents of present students		3	5	8	3		3.57
teacher responses			1	6	1		4.00

I am satisfied with how well I was taught what it meant to be a Christian in this world.

Responses:

	HD	D	U	S	HS	NA	Mean
graduate responses		4	3	7	2		3.43
student responses		4	6	28	6		3.81
parents of graduates responses		1	1	9	1		3.83
parents of present students			3	11	3		3.57
teacher responses			3	3	2		3.87

I am satisfied with how well the courses helped me to understand important things about life.

Responses:

	HD	D	U	S	HS	NA	Mean
graduate responses		2	5	7	2		3.56
student responses		5	8	26	4	1	3.67
parents of graduates responses			3	8		1	3.72
parents of present students			2	17			3.89
teacher responses			3	4	1		3.75

I am satisfied with the number of opportunities given to discuss world problems, e.g. environmental issues, world hunger, or social injustice.

Responses:

	HD	D	U	S	HS	NA	Mean
graduate responses		2	2	8	4		3.87
student responses		6	9	21	8		3.70
parents of graduates responses			2	9	1		3.91
parents of present students			1	16	2		4.05
teacher responses				6	1	1	4.14

I am satisfied with the way in which a student's personal faith was developed and nurtured at ECHS.

Responses:

	HD	D	U	S	HS	NA	Mean
graduate responses		4	4	5	2	1	3.33
student responses	1	5	9	28	1		3.52
parents of graduates responses		1	2	8	1		3.75
parents of present students		7	5	4	2	1	3.05
teacher responses		1	5	2			3.12

I am satisfied with the number of opportunities students had to experience formal devotional times together.

Responses:

	HD	D	U	S	HS	NA	Mean
graduate responses	1	4	4	5	2		3.18
student responses		10	10	20	3	1	3.37
parents of graduates responses		2	4	3	1	2	3.30
parents of present students	1	3	6	8	1		3.26
teacher responses			4	3	1		3.62

I am satisfied with the quality of these devotional times.

Responses:

	HD	D	U	S	HS	NA	Mean
graduate responses	2	5	4	5			2.75
student responses		11	12	19	1	1	3.23
parents of graduates responses	1	2	4	2	1	2	3.00
parents of present students		6	8	5			2.94
teacher responses	1	1	4	2			2.87

I am satisfied with the number of opportunities students had to express their faith openly.

Responses:

	HD	D	U	S	HS	NA	Mean
graduate responses	1	2	5	5	3		3.43
student responses	1	5	15	21	2		3.40
parents of graduates responses		1	3	7	1		3.66
parents of present students		4	4	9		2	3.29
teacher responses	1	1	4	1	1		3.00

I am satisfied that students are being treated as individuals with their own gifts and talents.

Responses:

	HD	D	U	S	HS	NA	Mean
graduate responses		4	8	2	2		3.12
student responses		3	3	27	11		4.04
parents of graduates responses	1	1	1	7	2		3.66
parents of present students			2	14	3		4.05
teacher responses			1	4	3		4.25

I am satisfied with the amount of help teachers give to students that need help.

Responses:

	HD	D	U	S	HS	NA	Mean
graduate responses		1	2	5	8		4.25
student responses		1	3	13	27		4.50
parents of graduates responses		1	2	8	1		3.75
parents of present students		3		13	3		3.84
teacher responses		3	2	1	2		3.25

I am satisfied with the amount of positive attention that teacher give to students' opinions.

Responses:

	HD	D	U	S	HS	NA	Mean
graduate responses			3	10	3		4.00
student responses		2	4	20	18		4.22
parents of graduates responses	1		2	7		2	3.50
parents of present students			3	13	3		4.00
teacher responses			1	6	1		4.00

I am satisfied that the rules that students have to follow reflect the Christian direction for the school.

Responses:

	HD	D	U	S	HS	NA	Mean
graduate responses		2	6	2	3	1	3.00
student responses		6	10	23	5		3.61
parents of graduates responses		2	4	6			3.33
parents of present students	1	6	5	4	2		2.84
teacher responses			2	5	1		3.87

I am satisfied with the way in which students are disciplined when they skip classes.

Responses:

	HD	D	U	S	HS	NA	Mean
graduate responses	2	3	3	7	1		3.12
student responses	6	13	6	16	2	1	2.88
parents of graduates responses		1	2	8		1	3.63
parents of present students	3		6	8	1	1	3.22
teacher responses		1	2	3	1		3.12

I am satisfied with the way in which students are disciplined when they are late for class.

Responses:

	HD	D	U	S	HS	NA	Mean
graduate responses	3	5	2	5		1	2.60
student responses	6	8	7	20	3		3.13
parents of graduates responses		1	2	8		1	3.63
parents of present students	3		7	7	2		3.26
teacher responses		3	3	2			3.87

I am satisfied with the way in which students are disciplined when they are rude to teachers or fellow students.

Responses:

	HD	D	U	S	HS	NA	Mean
graduate responses		3	4	6	1	2	3.35
student responses	5	8	8	19	2	2	3.11
parents of graduates responses	2		3	6		1	3.18
parents of present students	2	2	11	3		1	2.83
teacher responses		2	2	4			3.25

I am satisfied that the evaluation procedures reflected the Christian emphasis in the school.

Responses:

	HD	D	U	S	HS	NA	Mean
graduate responses		1	5	6	2	2	3.64
student responses	1	4	17	20	1	1	3.37
parents of graduates responses			9	3			3.25
parents of present students	1	1	4	13			3.52
teacher responses			3	4	1		3.75

I am satisfied with the way students express Christian love in the school.

Responses:

	HD	D	U	S	HS	NA	Mean
graduate responses	3	3	8	2			2.56
student responses	5	12	13	14			2.81
parents of graduates responses		2	7	2		1	3.00
parents of present students		9	1	7	1	1	3.00
teacher responses	1	1	4	2			2.87

I am satisfied with the general behaviour of students.

Responses:

	HD	D	U	S	HS	NA	Mean
graduate responses		7	2	6		1	2.93
student responses	1	3	10	28	2		3.61
parents of graduates responses	1		5	6			3.33
parents of present students	2	5	3	9			3.00
teacher responses				8			4.00

I am satisfied with the way in which the present extra-curricular activities promoted Christian lifestyle.

Responses:

	HD	D	U	S	HS	NA	Mean
graduate responses		1	7	7	1		3.50
student responses		4	10	12	16	2	3.95
parents of graduates responses	1	1	4	4	2		3.41
parents of present students		1	10	6	1	1	3.38
teacher responses		2		6			3.50

I am satisfied with the number of extra-curricular activities that promoted Christian lifestyle.

Responses:

	HD	D	U	S	HS	NA	Mean
graduate responses		4	5	6	1		3.25
student responses		9	12	13	8	2	3.95
parents of graduates responses		1	3	5	1	2	3.60
parents of present students		5	6	5	3		3.31
teacher responses		2		6			3.50

I am satisfied with the extent to which my expectations of Christian Education were met.

Responses:

	HD	D	U	S	HS	NA	Mean
graduate responses		1	3	8	3	1	3.86
student responses		2	6	33	3		3.84
parents of graduates responses		1		9	1	1	3.90
parents of present students		3		14	2		3.78
teacher responses		1	2	5			3.50